INFORMATION TO USERS

This was produced from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure you of complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark it is an indication that the film inspector noticed either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, or duplicate copy. Unless we meant to delete copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed, you will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed the photographer has followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For any illustrations that cannot be reproduced satisfactorily by xerography, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and tipped into your xerographic copy. Requests can be made to our Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases we have filmed the best available copy.
THE EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT OF JACQUES BARZUN:
ITS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION AND
SIGNIFICANCE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

John Thomas Holton, B.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1980

Reading Committee

Professor Robert B. Sutton
Professor Donald R. Cruickshank
Professor Paul R. Klohr
Professor Philip L. Smith

Approved By

Adviser
Faculty of Foundations and Research
To My Parents
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my deep obligation to Professor Robert B. Sutton, my adviser, whose wisdom and insight helped me understand the history of American education; to Professor Donald R. Cruickshank, whose courses in teacher education gave me a sense of the field; to Professor Paul R. Klohr, who exemplifies the teacher-scholar; and to Professor Philip L. Smith, who made me think about what I was doing.

In addition, I wish to thank my friends at Ohio State, and give a special thanks to Craig Kridel.

Mrs. Robert W. McClure typed the manuscript and was ever-patient with my eccentric spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing, for which she deserves a round of applause.

Finally, it is impossible to put into words my thanks to Connie.
VITA

April 28, 1943 .................................. Born - Chicago, Illinois
1965 ........................................ B.A., University of Illinois Urbana, Illinois
1967 - 1973 ................................ Teacher, Columbus School for Girls, Columbus, Ohio
1976 - 1978 ................................ Teaching Associate, Faculty of Curriculum and Foundations, The Ohio State University
1978 - 1980 ................................ Research Associate, Faculty of Foundations and Research, The Ohio State University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Foundations of Education

History of Education. Professor Robert B. Sutton
Teacher Education. Professor Donald R. Cruickshank
Curriculum. Professor Paul R. Klohr
Philosophy of Education. Professor Philip L. Smith
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter**

**I. THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE HISTORICAL ENTERPRISE**

- Statement of the Problem and the Method to be Used .................................. 3
- The Humanist Tradition ................................................................. 6
- History: A Mode of Thought ........................................................ 10
- History: The Way of Finesse ..................................................... 21
- The Use of History ................................................................. 31

**II. BARZUN'S WORK: CULTURAL HISTORY** ............................................. 39

- Cultural History: A Synthesis ................................................................ 39
- History as General Education .......................................................... 46
- Darwin, Marx, Wagner ........................................................................ 56
- A Summary View .................................................................................. 66

**III. BARZUN'S CRITICISM OF EDUCATION** ............................................ 78

- The Critic's Task ........................................................................... 78
- The Method of the Critic ............................................................... 81
- Barzun's Works of Criticism ......................................................... 84
- The Critic as Fox .............................................................................. 88
- Education and Intellect ................................................................. 100
IV. BARZUN: TEACHER IN AMERICA ............... 116
   Barzun's Pedagogy ...................... 133
   Barzun as Teacher: A Book and a Course .. 144
   A Course: Humanities A1-A2; B1-B2 .... 148

V. THE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS ............... 165
   The Commission's Answer .............. 168
   The Role of the Teacher: Barzun's View .. 178
CHAPTER ONE

The Nature and Function of the Historical Enterprise

Introduction

The cover of a recent Time pictures a blackboard on which is scrawled, "HELP! Teacher Can't Teach."

Like some vast grand jury gradually and reluctantly arriving at a verdict, politicians, educators and... millions of parents have come to believe that the U. S. public schools are in parlous trouble... increasingly too parents have begun to blame the shortcomings of the schools on the lone and very visible figure at the front of the classroom... Horror stories about teaching abound... 1

The article goes on to tell some of the horror stories about illiterate teachers who are incapable of teaching because they have been so poorly prepared. Such articles exposing the alleged inadequacies of American teachers are not new, but may be found in writing about teachers and teaching at least back as far as the beginning of the nineteenth century. What appears to be a crisis is really the perennial problem of how teachers can be prepared for classrooms.

A way to address this perennial problem is through the examination of the various traditions of thought that have posed solutions to it. One of these traditions, the
humanist, is an old and honorable one that has spoken to the problems of education generally and to those of teaching particularly. Professor Jacques Barzun of Columbia University is a modern exemplar of the humanist tradition's concern with teaching. It will be the aim of this dissertation to address the problem of teacher preparation through a study of his extensive written work. In a career spanning more than five decades, Professor Barzun has been very influential at Columbia in the designing and the teaching of courses in history and the humanities, and he has been an outspoken, nationally known critic of the educational enterprise, as well as an advocate of a particular view of the activities of effective teachers.

The aim of the dissertation will be to provide an understanding of Barzun's criticism of the educational enterprise and of his view of the nature of effective teaching. It is the assertion of the dissertation that the critical stance and advocacy of a view of teaching are informed by Barzun's conception of the nature and function of the historical enterprise; it will continue with a description of the kind of historical work Barzun engaged in over a very long and productive career.

With this foundation laid down, it will be possible to explore Barzun's criticism of the educational enterprise as it exists in our time, and understand the view of the
teacher's function that he advocates. Finally, it will be seen how Barzun's work, which addresses the persistent question of "what kind of instruction is the best preparation for life in a democracy" may be applied to the problem of the preparation of teachers for schools in a democracy.

Statement of the Problem and the Method to be Used

The problem of the dissertation then will be to set forth fairly and objectively a description and analysis of Barzun's educational thought by showing its relationship with Barzun's historical and cultural studies. Further, the problem entails an attempt to extend Barzun's work to the particular field of teacher education.

The principal difficulty that the task entails results from the fact that Barzun is a representative of the tradition of rational pragmatic humanism -- the tradition of, for example, James, Shaw, Carlyle, Whitehead, and Montaigne. As much as this tradition is honored, it is an almost alien tradition nowadays; it appears particularly alien to those in the field of education. The fields of education generally and of teacher education particularly are largely concerned with the discovery of durable links between those social facts relevant to teaching and learning; the behaviors correlated with effective teachers, for example. The humanist concern for that which is unique and not necessarily amenable to precise definition or classification seems interesting but probably insignificant to those with the orientation common
in colleges of education. Precisely for this reason the problem of presenting a fair and objective picture of Barzun's educational thought demands that the description and analysis be set forth so that Barzun's work can be judged according to the tradition he is working in. The goal is not to convert the reader but to present Barzun's educational thought so that it may be seen for what it is in its own terms and conditions.

The method to be used in addressing the problem will be historical-philosophical-literary, the method of the humanities. The method of the humanities is not a method in the sense of the method for solving quadratic equations, or the method for making ammonia. While it demands the search for evidence, requiring that that evidence be scrutinized reasonably, the method of the humanities calls for the mind to balance the free play of the imagination with what it knows of the available evidence, of the powers of reason, and of what seems possible. Just as do other methods of discovery, the method of the humanities demands rigor, precision, and intellectual honesty. But where the check on the method of solving quadratic equations is the consistency of the answers which result, the check on the method of the humanities is the exercise of judgment on the part of the reader. it is judged by the aptness of its form, by its relation to the questions posed, or by whatever seems to be demanded by the case.
As already mentioned, the purpose of this chapter will be to provide a description of Jacques Barzun's conception of history, and so provide a base for an understanding of his educational thought. It is not the aim of this description to analyze the logical or philosophical foundations of Barzun's historical work except as this moves the description ahead. The description will be of Barzun's view of the enterprise of history, its relationship with other human studies, its worth to those who study it, and how it provides a foundation for understanding other things, as, for example, educational principles and practices. The justification for mere description as against more detailed logical and philosophical analysis is that this dissertation is directed toward an audience of educators that is more likely to be concerned with Barzun's educational rather than his historical thought, but which needs an exposition of the latter in order to appreciate the former.

Leaving Barzun free, as it were, to argue his own case has the advantage of making clear the tradition in which he is working, a tradition which it is safe to say is different from that which informs American teacher education in the present day. The clarification of the tradition of scholarly endeavor in which Barzun has worked will make it possible to judge his educational thought as it reflects the tradition it grows out of, rather than forcing it to meet the requirements of another and judging it adversely for its failure to do so.
The Humanist Tradition

A tradition is neither a coherent philosophy nor a political movement whose members can be clearly marked by their adherence to a particular mode of thought or a party line. Rather, it is a stance or an orientation which accommodates considerable variation of thought within broad limits. The stance or orientation with which Barzun associates himself is that of Western humanism, a tradition that is very broad and very old. Because of its age and breadth, humanism has many different possible definitions, but the definition that seems most apt for an understanding of Jacques Barzun's stance is Lionel Trilling's. For Trilling, humanism is an attitude which is held by men who believe that it is

an advantage to live in society, and, at that, in a complex and highly developed society, and who believe that man fulfills his nature and reaches his proper stature in this circumstance. The personal virtues which humanism cherishes are intelligence, amenity, and tolerance; the particular courage it asks for is that which is exercised in support of these virtues. The qualities of intelligence which it chiefly prizes are modulation and flexibility. . . it wants the mind to be, in the words of Montaigne, . . . 'ondoyant et divers.'

In addition, Trilling tells us, humanism values most in society the aspects of justice and continuity, and these valued aspects present humanism with a contradiction. Justice demands that the human condition be pictured as static, but continuity suggests "that society is not absolute but
pragmatic and even anomalous." In turn, justice indicates that what is anomalous should be removed, but the "ideal of social continuity" makes it apparent that the attempt to eliminate anomaly will bring about "new and even worse anomalies, the nature of man being what it is. 'Let justice be done though the heavens fall' is balanced by awareness of the likelihood that after the heavens have fallen justice will not ever be done again." The humanist's resolution of the contradiction is not to explain it away but to hold the two aspects in balance by "taking thought and revising sensibility" and thereby bringing about gradual changes in the desirable balance. Thought and the revision of sensibility demand that the humanist rely on the power of "discourse and letters."² This description of the "attitude of humanism" is also descriptive of Barzun's work in four principal ways. These four appear again and again in his work, and so their presentation along with some amplification of them is appropriate at this point.

1) THE CENTRALITY OF THE PERSON

While Barzun shares the humanist attitude that it is an advantage to live in society and that man fulfills his nature there, he sees the advantage as the person's. Thus his interest is in the deeds of men and women -- both real and imagined -- who have lived and who live. Society is the sum and total of these deeds and not a shadowy and impersonal force which plays with people like a manifestation of nature.
It is a backdrop that completes the human picture, but Barzun's attention is constantly drawn to that which will give him an understanding of the deed-doing men and women, one by one, rather than as groups or abstractions like "economic man." This means that the person becomes very important, perhaps even more important than the group, as, for example, Hamlet's single voice which contradicts what every other character in the play "knows for a fact" serves the audience. He is the one man in the right who is a majority of one.

What is not near Hamlet's conscience is not near our own because he is our moral interpreter. He is the voice of ethical sensibility in a sophisticated, courtly milieu; his bitter asides, which penetrate Claudius's façade of kingly virtue and propriety, initiate, so to speak, the moral action of the play.

It is also, therefore, important that the person not be made too comprehensible by reduction of his character to system or regularity, both because such system or regularity seems contrary to our historical experience of persons, but also because of the pernicious effects such reduction will have on the generality of men in society.

2) THE PLURALISTIC AND ANOMALOUS NATURE OF SOCIETY

Society is a human invention, or at least a human manifestation, and thus bears the stamp of man's pluralistic and (even) anomalous nature. If history has a lesson, Barzun tells his readers, it is that the record of man's life in
society cannot without doing violence to the facts of the case be resolved into neatness and logical order. Rather it is a tale which can be understood only to a point. The corollary to this is that no single explanation will do to sort out the near chaos. The chaotic elements that refuse to be amenable to comprehensive explanations, the "stubborn and irreducible facts," must not be flouted. The anomalous fact is ignored only at the peril of ignoring what is in fact present.

3) THE CENTRALITY OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

In such a society, populated by such persons, intelligence is valued in Trilling's description of the humanist attitude not as a virtue, but as a necessity. The diversity of men and of their activities means that it is an illusion to think that we can reduce men to a few types and their activities to a set of rules, and thereby be done with thinking about them. The burden, therefore, that Barzun demands be borne is that of taking thought to understand our world, "to think better, and, testing the thought, to act." In short, man (and woman) must live by his (and her) wits.

4) THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCOURSE AND LETTERS

For Barzun, as for those holding the humanist attitude, the importance of discourse and letters is neither solely in elegance of style and phrasing, nor solely in their instrumental importance -- that of passing information from mind
to mind. If men must live by their wits, the medium of those wits is found in discourse and letters. The substance of those wits, to paraphrase a publisher, though born in our heads, takes substance in print. Thus discourse and letters permit one both to reach out from the narrowly circumscribed patch of ground that defines the world for most of us and to reach into oneself, and so, by the struggle to articulate thought, to think and to know one's thoughts and self the better. Thus corruption of language -- and of its principal forms, discourse and letters -- is not an esthetic offense but one against man and his society, for it stunts his ability to know his society and to know himself.

The study which most comfortably encompasses the humanist stance and the four aspects which seem particularly Barzun's is history, and it is that study which now comes to the center of attention of this chapter.

**History: A Mode of Thought**

Barzun observes that "in the conduct of life... the most difficult choice is not simply what to believe but what mode of thought to trust that leads to belief." The mode of thought that Barzun trusts is history. He views history as a study directed to a particular end. The end is formative rather than summative, in that what comes of the study of history is not mere information about the past (although that is part of it) which could be said to sum up what is
known about the past. Rather, historical study is chiefly
formative because it leads one to know the past through a
particular mode of thought the learning of which demands a
re-formation of the way one thinks. What this formative
study entails is the object of the next section. 11

In his writings about the nature of the mind, Barzun
returns often to the first section of Blaise Pascal's
Pensées, "Thoughts on Mind and Style." 12 In that section
of his Pensées, Pascal suggests two general styles of mind:
the mathematical and the intuitive (l'esprit de géométrie
and l'esprit de finesse).

In the one (l'esprit de géométrie), the prin-
ciples are palpable, but removed from ordi-
ary use: so that for want of habit it is dif-
cult to turn one's mind in that direction;
but if one turns it thither ever so little,
one sees the principles fully, and one must
have a quite inaccurate mind who reasons
wrongly from principles so plain that it is
almost impossible that they should escape
notice.

But in the intuitive mind the principles are
found in common use, and are before the eyes
of everybody. One has only to look, and no
effort is necessary; it is only a question of
good eyesight, but it must be good, for the
principles are so subtle and so numerous,
that it is almost impossible but that some
escape notice. Now the omission of one
principle leads to error; thus one must have
very clear eyesight to see all the prin-
ciples, and in the next place an accurate mind,
to draw false deductions from known
principles. 13
It is instructive to note the successive uses Barzun finds for Pascal's distinction. In his 1943 book, *Romanticism and the Modern Ego*, the distinction becomes a way to illuminate the difference between the classical and the romantic casts of mind. First he recapitulates the passage in Pascal by noting that neither style of mind is intrinsically of more "subtlety and greatness" than the other, but that their difference lies in the kind of universe of which each is capable of making sense. The intuitive style is capable of distinguishing and dealing

with concrete things, with living beings, as against the geometrician's ability to manipulate abstractions and definitions of the non-existent. . . the geometrician works in a closed universe, limited by his own axioms and definitions. . .

Now Barzun shifts to his analogy and substitutes "romantic" for intuitive. The "romanticist works in an open universe, limited by concrete imperfections. . . imperfections which have not all been charted, which may change, and which need not be the same for all men."\(^{14}\) Classicism may then be substituted for the geometrical "in its assumption that human shortcomings must be disregarded in order to be corrected, correctness being stated in the form of an exact rule. . . " and the distinction is completed with the further definition of romanticism as "the belief that exactitude is only a guide to thought, less important than fact, and never worthy of receiving human sacrifices."\(^{15}\)
The distinction serves as a metaphor to illuminate Barzun's understanding of the difference between two casts of mind.

In a 1959 work, *The House of Intellect*, Pascal's distinction is given a second, more important role. Here, Barzun uses it to describe a fault he finds in the way language itself is used in contemporary culture. Language in its imagery and its sense has come to be dominated by the geometrical spirit. While of course it is fit and proper to express certain things in that way, it is a great error to demand that all of human experience be framed in those images. To describe all human difficulties as "problems" and to search for "solutions" certainly does harm, as, for example, when the "problem" is "Who shall be elected president?" In the real sense of géométrie, there is in fact no problem; rather, there is a demand that a judgment be made, a judgment which cannot be made in light of "palpable principles" that, if followed, will lead to incontrovertible results. In fact, there are no such principles. Instead, there are "the principles found in common use, and... before the eyes of everybody." No special training or knowledge of certain methods is needed to see these common principles; "it is only a question of eyesight... for the principles are so subtle and so numerous that it is only impossible but that some escape notice." But the misapplied imagery turns the situation into a "problem," when what is wanted is the esprit de finesse, and its imagery, the imagery
finesse will enable citizens to bring "into one view of many elements differing in kind, probability, and importance." Such a view possibly leads to "the instantaneous synthesis by which the trained mind of the second category grasps a situation and solves it." In this use of the distinction, then, Barzun finds it suggestive not simply as an analogy that can be used to distinguish classic and romantic but as a way of commenting on the workings of contemporary culture. This link between thought and style of expression points out the error of attempting to think about the difficulties of life in the language appropriate to thought about "l'univers géométrique." The handling of words is to the thinker, the historian, the publicist, what dexterity and mathematical ingenuity are to the experimental scientist.

A third and further elaboration of the distinction between finesse and géométrie along with a more explicit statement of the studies most appropriate to each is found in Barzun's 1964 work, Science: The Glorious Entertainment. He develops the argument of the book by describing the nature of science as a way of understanding our universe. In a chapter entitled "Misbehavioral Science," Barzun claims that a part of human life is not truly available to study by statistical science, although he does not deny that certain aspects of human behavior are open to study. The difference between those two aspects is found in the fact that while some human
behavior is composed of actions that are commensurate with statistical methods -- live births per 100,000 population, number of misaddressed letters -- because of its uniformity, other behavior is not, because it is a manifestation of an individual. Science and its spirit must always be inexact because:

its definitions are always partial (in both senses), and it fails in its own domain of prediction and control, because these apply only statistically to the mass -- which is to say that science works with great accuracy by hit-and-miss. When it announces that the half-life of Radon 222 is 3.8 days, this tells us that half of any amount will have disintegrated in the time; which half cannot be foretold. No one cares. But if a law court jailed or hanged half the accused brought before it in any three or four days, without caring which half, there would be commotion.

Science, says Barzun, is, therefore, precise, but it is not exact in attending to the real differences that separate one person from another. If one wants a way to study persons with exactness, one must rely on "the historical disciplines from poetry to law. . ." Each of these historical disciplines attends to the person exactly and seeks to show him or her in such a way that he or she will not be confounded with any other person.

In the final chapter of the book, "One Mind in Many Modes," Barzun connects the exactness of the historical disciplines with l'esprit de finesse and the precision of
science with l'esprit de géométrie. It should be pointed out that this connection is not meant to disparage either of the spirits but to aver that each addresses most effectively data appropriate to it. He recalls Pascal's observation that there are at least two ways of thinking -- the geometrical and that which he calls the way of finesse. This in itself shows that the two ways do not belong to separate species of minds. Indeed, having regard to the ambiguity of the French word esprit, one should not take it to mean 'a person with such a mind,' but rather the spirit, the stance, of geometry -- or of finesse -- which anyone may employ alternately in dealing with the matters to which each is appropriate.20

Among the many modes in which the human mind is capable of working are these two. The one stance or spirit is appropriate for the discovery and demonstration of "unchanging relations" between rigidly defined entities that have been stripped "of the sensible aspects of reality." While it may be difficult to turn attention of propositions and definitions so framed, the difficulty is that of one particular man's mind to work in such a way. The way of meeting experience called finesse, Barzun tells his readers, is that which is intent upon meeting the experience at first-hand, taking it up "by rapid synthetic glance, (and) reaching truth, not through demonstration, but through an intuition of significance."
This quick sense of how things go together and of what they mean may be right or wrong and usually cannot give an account of its work: to prove its rightness or error is impossible — "but it is the only means by which one can know the world at first hand." 21 Clearly, then, if *finesse* is what Barzun claims it is, it is the mode of mind most appropriate to an examination of the spirit of geometry as a manifestation of intelligent human activity. In fact, the examination of intelligent human activity seems to lie within the province of *finesse*, since what such an examination demands is that activity be viewed at first hand and as complete as possible, and not abstracted or reduced to sharply defined entities whose relations with one another have been discovered and demonstrated. While such discovery and demonstration may be desirable for certain ends, the sacrifice of the variety of individual human details necessary for such discovery and demonstration becomes too great a sacrifice.

In a fourth reference to the distinction made by Pascal, Barzun completes his connection between *finesse* and history, and thereby makes the case that although history lacks the precision of science, this lack is compensated for by history's ability to grasp with exactness the story of intelligent human activity.
In the 1974 work, *Clio and the Doctors*, Barzun addresses those historians who wish to make history more precise and scientific by applying the methods of psychological and statistical investigation to history. In his defense of the history that does not use such methods, Barzun refers to Pascal, but only in a "compressed paraphrase" that serves as a preface to a discussion of the difference between history and "Other Works of the Mind." The paraphrase emphasizes the nature of the facts amenable to the spirit of geometry: ". . . the elements and definitions are clear, abstract, and changeable, but stand outside the ordinary ways of thought and speech. . ." "It is easy to use these concepts correctly, once their strange artificiality has been grasped; it is then but the application of method."

The facts within the realm of intuition "come out of the common stock and are known by common names which elude definition. Hence it is hard to reason justly with them because they are so numerous, mixed, and confusing: there is no method." Given these differences between the two realms, Barzun suggests that genius in the conduct of inquiry in each is different,

. . . genius in science consists in adding to the stock of such defined entities and showing their place and meaning within the whole system of science and number; whereas genius in the realm of intuition consists in discerning pattern and significance in the uncontrollable confusion of life and embodying the discovery in intelligible form."
There are, then, two quite distinct "movements of the mind." Each movement is, although tending in different directions, the result of motion of the human mind which is only the species, "... otherwise every sort of thinker would be excluded from the understanding of other sorts," the movements being varieties or orientations of that single species.

The aim of this discussion of the use that Barzun finds for Pascal's distinction between the two esprits has been to prepare the way for a discussion of Barzun's conception of history. The discussion of Pascal has shown that Barzun begins his examination of the world, its people and their cultures with an attempt to understand man in his variety, and as his culture is a product of the human mind. The mind, observes Barzun, is capable of working in many ways: solving puzzles, devising the alphabet, singing songs, discovering a way to live in alien elements -- the ocean, the air, outer space. "If it were not so, it would be impossible to teach children both nonsense verse and the multiplication table." Each of these avatars of intelligent human activity shows how the mind is capable of meeting different kinds of experiences by working in quite different and seemingly alien ways. The question now becomes, is there some way to bring the mind to bear on intelligent human activity comprehensively, while not usurping the powers of the mind that work with this or that
set of data, but able at least to see and understand those varieties of mind as they are and on their own terms? Clearly, for Barzun, the way is history.

History has to this point not made an appearance except by implication of the discussion of Barzun's tradition, the stance, that is the matrix out of which the historical writing Barzun admires and his own work comes. The contrast between the two esprits is basic to Barzun's historical thought because it suggests that both finesse and géométrie are in fact aspects of the human mind. To see and understand this important truth is, for Barzun, an antidote to what he sees as the intellectual imperialism of our time that demands pride of place to the aspect of the mind's working defined by géométrie. To say this is not to suggest a counter claim that would imperialistically demand that all knowledge fit the esprit de finesse. Rather, it is Barzun's aim to work to understand the appropriate province where each should rule. In the next section of this chapter, an attempt will be made to define the study of history as Barzun conceives it by answering the general questions, What is history? What is included in its study? How is historical study carried out? and, What is the use of historical study? Of History?
History: The Way of Finesse

The substance of history is "res gestae, things done; the activities of men." Although this is clear enough, Barzun, like other historians, recognizes that even so clear a statement is ambiguous. Carl L. Becker points out that when I use the term history, I mean knowledge of the past. No doubt throughout all past time there occurred a series of events which, whether we know what it was or not, constitutes history in some ultimate sense. . . .

Henry S. Commager likewise notes that

The first thing to be said about History is that the word itself is ambiguous. It means two quite distinct things. It means the past and all that happened in the past. It means, too, the record of the past. . . . all that men have said and written of the past, or, in the succinct words of Jacob Burckhardt, "what one age finds worthy of note in another."

Barzun admits four meanings to 'history.' The first meaning is that history equals the event itself. The record of the event, or written history, gives the second meaning. But in order to tell the story of the event, some human labor is necessary to set down the events in narrative form. The fourth meaning of the word is found in the fact that the recollection of the past "in the minds of a whole people. . . ." often serves as "triggers to action. . . ." The recollection of the fact of slavery or of the oppression of women has triggered action, as, for example, in the "call for Black Studies, Women's Studies. . . ." As Barzun and Graff sum up the relation of the four meanings: " . . . History-as-Event

All history then begins with Event or events. These are simply those things done by men, their activities. 30 History is thus the great catch-all, since a great part of every man's day and night is taken up with some form of intelligent activity. The butcher's, the baker's, the poet's, the peasant's, the czar's, and the thief's day to day activities result in events which may serve the hard-at-work historian with the substance of history as narrative. 31 But because such human activities, especially those done by the anonymous majority of mankind, are evanescent, the historical worker's task begins with a search for some evidence of those activities whether the evidence was the result of intentional or unintentional attempt to leave such evidence: such things as chronicles, diaries, inscriptions, tales, sagas, tape recordings, and anecdotes. Among the unintentional transmitters are human remains, literature, language, customs, and tools. 32

If these are the materials with which a historian must begin, it might be suggested, then, compared to the scientific investigator, the historian is at a great disadvantage because it seems that he is forced to begin with second-hand descriptions of events, and, further, that it is impossible for him to recreate experimentally the events in order to
check on the reliability of the description. However, if the historian's evidence is not judged by its failure to meet the requirements of a scientific investigator, a different view of such evidence is apparent.

The historian is attempting to tell the story of a past event. He is not concerned with predicting or controlling the occurrence of similar events that may happen in the future, and so his interest is not in finding the definable entity and the invariable relationships between it and other entities. Instead, the historian is interested in finding out whatever can be found out about the event, because his quest is to recreate in so far as it is possible the event itself as it is an intelligent activity.

History-as Hard-Work thus begins with a search for the facts among the intentional and unintentional transmitters of evidence. But history is neither a simple record of all of the facts, nor is it a record of whatever the historian finds among his sources. The historian is intent on giving an intelligible account of what happened, so he must be selective, and he is intent upon giving a true account, and so he must verify the facts that he finds. It is in this part of the historian's work that it is most apparent how the work differs from the scientist's, and it is also most clear why the conception of finesse is vital to an understanding of the historian's work.
The evidence that is discovered cannot be used "in the state in which it is found." The first task of the historian is to verify the evidence: determine whether, for example, the report of an art exhibit was written by one who had actually seen the exhibit, find the correct first name of the reporter, determine whether the document in which the report is found is genuine (that it was written in fact by the purported author) and authentic (that it reports what the author claims to have seen). The historian must, therefore, "try to reach a decision and make it rationally convincing, not only to himself, but to others. The steps by which he performs this task constitute Verification." The nature of the materials precludes such verification following a method that the historian can use to progress from question to answer.

Method for the historian is not a process but only a "metaphor to say that he is rational and resourceful, imaginative and conscientious. Nothing prescribes the actual steps of his work. . . ." For example, Barzun and Graff discuss the alleged poisoning of Clare Booth Luce when she was the United States Ambassador to Italy. The historian who reads an account of the event in a newspaper will, like the ordinary citizen, bring a measure of judiciousness and previous knowledge to the account. The historian will attempt to make that "measure" into a considerable amount of those two qualities and look for appropriate knowledge wherever it can be found. What was the nature of the arsenic in the paint
dust? Was it arsenate of lead? If so, why was it misnamed in the newspaper account? According to the account, the paint was old and dry. Why was the Ambassador lodged in a room that had not been recently remodelled and repainted? The account gave as a reason for the dust showering down on the Ambassador the working of the laundry washing machines in the room above. The historian would wonder why washing machines would be on the upper floors of a building when they are usually found in the basement or the ground floor.

The activity of verification is conducted with regard to the historian's attention to human details, to his ability to think cogently about the details, and to his fund of knowledge. The historian is less like a scientist than he is like a lawyer or a detective\textsuperscript{36} in that he needs not only a well-stocked mind but also

an understanding of how people in other eras lived and behaved, what they believed, and how they managed their institutions. This \ldots fills the mind with images and also with questions, which when answered and discussed, make for what (is termed) depth. Meanwhile the funded information suggests the means for conducting the research.\textsuperscript{37}

Finally, then, the activity of verification comes down to the historian's human knowledge, to his intuition, to his spirit of finesse. But then how can the reader rely on what the historian has verified as a fact when there is no check on the verification?
Barzun argues that in fact the historian and the reader are not at a disadvantage given the circumstances of historical work. The historian is not merely writing what he thinks about his subject, and the reader is not a potential victim of whatever inaccuracies are in the historian's work. The historian is called to account for his exactness just as is the scientist for his precision. The difference between the two is the difference between activities and processes. "Activities are what we do and can imagine others having done; processes are what goes on unwilled or unknown." 38 The scientist deals with processes by providing precise measurements and minute detail about them. Such minuteness of detail and fineness of measurement are necessary "because without these exact pointers we are not sure that we know or what we know; the workings of matter are forever closed to our intuition. . ." To know about the "whirling of molecules in gas. . ." man is forced to rely on "analogies painfully sought through elaborate devices. . ." One dealing with human activities on the other hand has the advantage that both what is being studied and the one doing the study share an essential humanity, and this means, for instance, that

the return of the Ten Thousand or the destruction of Carthage needs only to be described to set up within us immediately precise ideas and visions and emotions. It is of no moment what percentage of the Ten Thousand wore out their boots on the march home. The figure 10,000 has no numerical significance. If the army was composed of 9,900 men or 10,000, nothing
in Xenophon's history would be changed: only the rough order of magnitude matters. But other details are all-important -- the route, the time spent, the dissentions and who and what caused them, the prospects changing from despair to hope, the great cry, "The sea! The sea!" when the retreating force climbed the heights of Mount Theches in Armenia . . ." 39

It is possible to criticize the historian's account on the same basis that the historian used when he was attempting to "imagine the real." 40 His imagination "springs from fact and is hedged in by probability." 41 The reader can ask if the facts have been adequately supported by evidence? Are the judgments about these facts true according to what the reader knows of probability in the sense of the balance of chances that, given such and such evidence, the event it records happened in a certain way; or, in other cases, that a supposed event did not in fact take place. This balance is not computable in figures as it is in mathematical probability; but it is not less attentively weighed and judged. Judgment is the historian's form of genius, and he himself is judged by the amount of it he can muster . . .

The reader makes the judgment about the account out of his own experience -- direct and vicarious -- of life and whatever other knowledge is apt. 42 The historian is precise and accurate in so far as he can recapture the distant reality by imagining it and by helping the reader to imagine that reality. Implicit in this discussion of verification is the importance of the final form of the narrative presented to the reader by the historian.
In writing down in narrative form the results of his investigation, the historian is faced with two considerations. First, he must report his findings accurately and clearly, and, second, he must consider that no rules exist whereby he can be certain that he has demonstrated what he has found accurately and clearly. Since his aim is to express something speculative about human life itself, he is faced with the dilemma James described in his essay, "The Sentiment of Rationality:

On the one hand, so far as they retain any multiplicity in their (that is, all our speculations) terms, they fail to get us out of the empirical sand-heap world; on the other, so far as they eliminate multiplicity the practical man despises their barrenness. The most they can say is that the elements of the world are such and such, and that each is identical with itself wherever found; but the question Where is it found? the practical man is left to answer by his own wit. 43

Barzun uses James's phrase "the sentiment of rationality" to describe what the properly done historical narrative is to arouse in its reader. Significantly, for James, the sentiment of rationality links reason and sentiment. He cites Whitman's line, "I am sufficient as I am," and adds

This feeling of the sufficiency of the present moment, of its absoluteness... this absence of all need to explain it, account for it, or justify it... is what I call the Sentiment of Rationality. As soon, in short, as we are enabled for any cause to think with perfect fluency, the thing we think of seems to us protanto rational. 44
The historian's demonstration is accomplished then by making the reader feel that what has been described "makes sense." The historian, in Barzun's understanding, is thus a pragmatist. In his *The Conduct of Inquiry*, Kaplan distinguishes pragmatism from logical positivism and operationism by noting that the two latter concepts "ask essentially the same question about any statement whose meaning is in doubt: Is it possible to establish the truth of the statement, and if so, how do we go about doing it?" The pragmatist, for his part,

asks what difference would it make to us if the statement were true? . . . The test of meaningfulness, the criterion of demarcation, is simply whether we can make something of a statement, whether it could conceivably matter to us, in a word, whether it signifies. And a statement's meaning lies in the difference it makes.45

In his working with the evidences of the past, the historian asks, like the pragmatist, "what difference would this make to my understanding?" If he finds a man reporting that he saw a witch, the question is, after establishing that the document recording the report is genuine and authentic, not whether there were in fact witches, but what difference does the fact that men report witches make for an understanding of the time and place? Barzun's historian likewise expects that the reader will be a pragmatist who reads history, not with the aim of finding a particular form of demonstration, but who will be content when the form presented by
the historian puts the reader in "satisfactory relation with other parts of" his experience. For example, does his speculation about people who believe in witches make sense to the reader?

It is obvious that such a position leaves a wide opening for error, "... and what is more, of unprovable error..." The historian might be wrong about his facts and he might yet persuade the reader of his correctness. But such a possibility "opens the door to real novelty: it is by being possibly wrong and possibly a new creation that the historical resembles (and may thus disclose) life itself." 47

Three of the four questions that were posed at the outset have now been answered. History is the narrative of the activities of men in the past, thus it is the "great catch-all," in that human intelligent action is as various as people. Art, science, literature, philosophy, music, sculpture, painting, and the graphic arts are all thus open to historical study. Historical study is an empirical study which works to discover objective facts and place them in the proper relation with other facts. This stance sets Barzun's conception of history off at once from formalism and subjectivism. Professor Smith describes the Progressive intellectuals' view of explanations by saying that

all explanations are relative, or, more specifically, that all sound explanations are relative, progressive intellectuals meant also to hold that sound explanations
are objective; that is, they are independent of anyone's "think-so." In offering this view they were providing an alternative to the traditional conception of sound explanations (formalism) as objective and universal. But they also meant to avoid the third and fourth alternatives (nominalism) that sound explanations are subjective and either absolute or relative.

While the historian does not possess the tools and methods for testing findings that the scientist possesses (one might just as well say that the scientist does not possess the tools and methods for testing his findings that the historian has), he has his own ways which provide the historian with tests that are appropriate to the materials he works with, that is, the activities of men. It remains to show the use of history.

The Use of History

Barzun recalls that when he was nineteen, he was asked to summarize Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* for *Keller's Digest of Books*. Except for this chance, he notes, he might have missed the book so early in his, and the book's, life. Although the task of summarizing Whitehead was little more than "elevated hackwork" and the resulting exposition was "feeble," the reading of the book had on its young reader "the effect of a vision." What was remarkable about the essay was for Barzun "its amplitude." What struck him was that no one else wrote about science with quite the comprehensiveness of Whitehead:
... no one saw why it might be necessary to discuss close together and with equal seriousness the nature of mathematics and the poems of Wordsworth and Shelley; to point out the medieval strain in the modern scientific view of nature; to detect in the uninflected modern languages the mark of modern self-consciousness; ... in short, to be historian, biographer, and critic while discussing science.50

Clearly the effect of Whitehead's book was important to Barzun's life, even to helping him determine his "choice of studies."51 Beyond this reported effect, it can be suggested that Whitehead's book struck Barzun because of its historical stance, which brought a whole range of human activity into a view that does not pretend omniscience, but that rather serves to open the reader to "the question of science as a cultural force."52 The essay thus both tells the reader something new and reaches beyond that particular knowledge, thereby stimulating the reader to look with new eyes at other parts of the world. If Whitehead's essay may be taken as an example of a work of history, it suggests in its effect on Barzun, the effect which Barzun suggests generally for history, and answers the question of the use of history.

History, asserts Barzun, is a "subject of learning" and that is its use: that is, it provokes the reader to reflect beyond the limits of information or knowledge which it gives. The distinction between subjects of learning and subjects of information is an old one and is, for example, found in a somewhat different form in The Republic, where Socrates
tells Glaucon that

some reports of our perceptions do not provoke thought to reconsideration because the judgment of them by sensation seems adequate, while others always invite the intellect to reflection because the sensation yields nothing that can be trusted . . .

Some studies lead the mind to search farther. DeQuincey distinguishes between "The Literature of Knowledge" and "The Literature of Power." The Literature of Knowledge, says DeQuincey, is represented in works like encyclopedias, which merely reflect the temporary knowledge of today's facts, while the Literature of Power "speaks ultimately. . . to the higher understanding or reason . . . on and through that humid light which clothes itself in the mists and glittering iris of human passions, desires, and genial emotions."53 The one literature, says DeQuincey, serves as a rudder, while the other is an oar or sail. The one summarizes the facts, while the other presents a part of the human story and thereby extends one's experience of life.

Reading history remakes the mind by feeding primitive pleasure in story, exercising thought and feeling, satisfying curiosity, and promoting the serenity of contemplation . . . There is no way to trace or name the change, which may be slow and gradual; but it is as palpable as that which follows a great artistic experience; it is a spiritual transformation without a creed. The reader is still free. He has been made more extensively conscious, but this new consciousness is absorbed into the old, it is not a fresh burden and not exclusive; a reader of history does not read a history, or one for each period; he reads history."54
The principal use of history is, therefore, not instrumen-
tal in that it does not serve as a tool for prediction or
control of the future. Instead, history does something to
the reader because it broadens his experience and his sense
of what life has been and possibly can be. History is a
formative study, its effect being like that which DeQuincey
ascribes to the Literature of Power:

And of this let everyone be assured -- that
he owes to the impassioned books which he
has read many a thousand more of emotions
than he can consciously trace back to them.
Dim by their origination, these emotions yet
arise in him, and mould him through life, like
forgotten incidents of his childhood.
CHAPTER ONE

Footnotes


10 Barzun, *Clio*, p. 129.


13 Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 3.

35

15 Barzun, *Classic*, p. 41.


18 Barzun, *Intellect*, p. 246


22 Barzun, *Clio*, pp. 91–92.


30 Barzun uses the word 'activity' in the same way that Richard Taylor uses the word 'action' in his book, *Action and Purpose* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: The Humanities Press, 1926). For Taylor, an action is purposeful, and intentional. A behavior, on the other hand, is mechanical like the involuntary blink of an eyelid.

Barzun and Graff, *Researcher*, p. 127
Barzun, *Clio*, p. 90.
Barzun, *Clio*, p. 96.
Barzun, *Clio*, p. 96.
Barzun, "Imagination," p. 5.
Barzun and Graff, *Researcher*, p. 133.
James, "Sentiment," p. 318.
James, "What Pragmatism Means," in McDermott, p. 42.
Barzun was nineteen in 1926. *Science in the Modern World* was published in 1925.


DeQuincey, "Literature," p. 744.
CHAPTER TWO

Barzun's Work: Cultural History

Because Jacques Barzun calls his historical work "cultural history," its description in this chapter will serve two ends. It will further refine the more general definition of history that was provided in the First Chapter, and such a description will illustrate how Barzun works with historical materials while showing the kinds of materials he is interested in and the shape such work finally takes.

Cultural History: A Synthesis

Cultural history begins with the fundamental interest of the historically minded in the deeds of men, and includes a concern with the cultural facts of time and place. "Culture," as it is used by Barzun, bears neither the narrow meaning of "genteel" nor the broader definition given by the anthropologist, who denotes "culture" as "all the ways of thinking and behaving in society." Rather, culture means "the pictures in our minds as opposed to measurable economic, political, or physical reality." Cultural history is thus the story of these pictures and the complex of relationships among them and the deeds of men.
To Barzun, cultural history begins with an event like the publication in a single year, 1859, of three works: Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, and Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. The cultural historian works to establish the circumstances of the event and searches out whatever will illuminate its meaning as a cultural fact. In the example just cited, Barzun begins with the coincidence of the three remarkable and important works published in the same year and essays to discover the "antecedents of whatever kind"\(^2\) — the authors' lives, the reception given the work by contemporaries, earlier works with the same or similar purport, the ideas that seem related to those appearing in the works. The early appearance of an idea may seem strange when compared with the idea as it has come to fit comfortably into the culture. Darwin's version of evolution has come to be one of the pictures in our minds, but it is also genetically related to the ideas of a myriad of his precursors and it is the cultural historian's task to show the earlier "strange and obscure" version of the idea "at work, meeting a problem or paradox, misunderstood, struggling for life like a newborn infant (and) not as we shall see it later (as in *Origin of Species*) washed and dressed up for the photographer."\(^3\)

The search for antecedents and concomitants of whatever kind separates cultural history "from intellectual history
or the history of ideas narrowly defined," because the cultural historian is interested in the "reciprocal dependence of the articulate and inarticulate" in the life of a culture rather than in the life of ideas as defined by the articulate minority. Viewed in this larger context, the strangeness or obscurity of the idea now takes on meaning itself and the reader is better able to judge

the mind that brought it into the world. . .

(the reader is) not bothered by his inconstancy, because for the first time (the reader) is in a position to discern what he was thinking of and why he set it forth just so; (the reader) sees him and it in history, pragmatically moving toward an unknown future, instead of an event already classified -- a pioneer, or a sad case, or an imperfect product of his times, now assimilated as one more institution in the body of all the institutions we call our cultural heritage.

To tell such a story has the effect of enriching the adventure of ideas by adding the buzz of life with its indefiniteness and complexity to what may be learned about ideas philosophically considered.

The aim of cultural history is thus the same as that which Barzun sets for history generally. The historian's motive is to establish what happened, and he knows that the task does not end with finding the facts. With the facts, the historian, "by an act of sturdiest imagination. . ." envisions "the distant reality." While no proof of the truth of the vision can be demanded or offered, the historian is not free to imagine whatever he wishes. His imagination
is kept within bounds of probability defined, not statistically, but by what the historian knows of human life, its common and uncommon possibilities. Out of these materials, the deeds of men and the discoverable pictures in men's minds, the historian's own mind and imagination, the cultural historian works to create an account which is intelligible but which does not deny the complexity and indefiniteness of life. The test of the account is a pragmatic one: has the historian put his story of the vents into satisfactory relation with themselves and the reader's own experience and imagination of the real?

The content and function of cultural history have evolved out of Barzun's own development as historian and teacher. In his own account of the origin of his sense of history and culture, he notes that to "be born near the beginning of the decade (1907) before the first world war and at the center of the then most advanced artistic activity in Paris is bound to have irreversible consequences on the mind." His father, Henri Martin Barzun, was a man of letters, and Jacques had grown up in a house that saw the regular visits of artists like Archipenko, Leger, Varese, Florent Schmitt, Ezra Pound, Jean Cocteau, Severini, Kandinsky. The optimism and élan of these artists were destroyed during the 1914-1918 war, which devoured some of the artists and shattered the spirits of others. The lesson that Jacques learned was that the living culture as a whole, art
and life, are closely tangled in one another. The living 
nursery of the culture is part of the whole house; a fire in 
the living room may have dire consequences for the nursery.

In 1919, Jacques's father came to the United States on a 
diplomatic mission and brought with him the twelve year old 
boy. Jacques became a permanent resident and then a citizen 
of the United States. In 1923, he entered Columbia College 
of Columbia University as a member of the Class of 1927. 
There, his early lessons about the wholeness of culture were 
to be given an intellectual foundation by the movement known 
as General Education.

General Education at Columbia had its roots in the dec-
ades before the First War. Teachers from a number of depart-
ments -- like Woodbridge from Philosophy and Woodberry from 
Literature -- had been examining the aims of education as 
they influence the lives of those taught. Professor J. E. 
Woodbridge, in an article on "Pragmatism and Education," 
described the essence of the pragmatism of Peirce and Dewey 
as the attempt to find a way to clarify ideas. The aim of 
education, therefore, is "the acquiring and imparting of 
clear ideas about the world."9 Clear ideas about the world 
could be gained in part from observing the variety of human 
activity. A student of George Edward Woodberry was 
John Erskine, who would in his turn make a mark on
Columbia when Barzun was there. Erskine recalled of Woodberry's teaching that he

reminded us that men cannot be, as we have learned to say, isolated; he showed us that poetry, religion, and politics in any noble sense are all rooted -- not in the genius of any one race or country -- but in the general heart of man ... Our best future would be to share the common lot. And by common lot he made us understand not the constrained inheritance of mediocrity, not the limited vision of local issues, but the whole drama of human experience. 10

This sense that man must be studied whole had been institutionalized at Columbia when Barzun was there. The feeling that it is an advantage to know "the drama of human experience" is thus at the heart of Barzun's understanding of General Education. It is also at the heart of what he is attempting to do in his work in cultural history -- to bring man's history as a thinking being into view. This does not mean that all knowledge is to be synthesized according to a grand scheme, or by means of a comprehensive mode of inquiry. The assumption of both cultural history and general education is that it is possible for the average intelligent man to gain a human understanding of man's science, literature, philosophy, technology, and arts. It is important to note that the understanding is not a final or ultimate understanding; it is rather an understanding which is a spur to a continual search to know.
When Barzun came to Columbia as a teacher, he in his turn addressed the aim of such a program. What, for example, are students to "get" out of a reading of Plato in their freshman year? The end, said Barzun, of such a study is to be a beginning, the start of self-education. "Freshmen are not expected to get what they should out of Plato, but what they can. Who indeed shall say what any man must get out of Plato?"

Each of Barzun's principal historical works is an account of men, their deeds, their art, science, philosophy, seen whole as cultural history. Each, therefore, resembles the spirit and practice of general education in that the implicit question asked of the reader of these works is "What difference does this knowledge make to your thought?" The goal of Barzun's cultural history is not simply to add to the sum of knowledge about the past; it is, in addition, a way to extend the reader's sense of life, of reality, by extending his knowledge of the acts and deeds of human beings. Such an extension or stretching of one's conception of the past is formative in the sense that it frees the reader's judgment by allowing him to see the antecedents of present culture. This has the effect of enabling him to view his own culture more clearly, and also of freeing him from the opinions, the mental equipment, that he has acquired from his culture, and which, without a knowledge of other possibilities, he might
have taken for final truth.

Cultural History: History as General Education

While there is not room for an exhaustive survey of Barzun's historical work, it will be possible to show what events he has investigated, how he works with historical materials, the kind of information and knowledge his work has yielded, and the way that he has himself answered the question, "What difference does this knowledge make to my thought?"

Barzun recalls finding in the last chapters of Montesquieu's The Spirit of the Laws, a "full-fledged theory of the class struggle applying to eighteenth century France." According to the theory, lively controversy in Montesquieu's day, the nobles of France owed their privileges to their descent from the Frankish barbarians who had conquered the indigenous Gauls some thousand years earlier during the breakup of the Roman Empire. Barzun's investigation of the writings on both sides of the controversy took him back to Tacitus and then forward again through the historians, lawyers, and polemicists who had argued about and defined the conflict between Gaul and German in a variety of ways.

The account of this controversy was Barzun's dissertation and first published book, The French Race: Theories of Its Origins and Their Political Implications. The subject
of the book was the "literary career" of the idea of the French Race, and the uses that ideas about the race and its origins served in the culture. By tracing the career of the idea, Barzun was able to show how the beliefs held by those who participated in the controversy -- from Tacitus through Montesquieu -- shaped the actions they took or justified. For Tacitus, the Germans served as an example of strict moral rectitude that could be used to shame his fellow decadent Romans. Tacitus was thus addressing important issues in Roman society, and, in following the idea of race as it was used after Tacitus, Barzun shows how such ideas touched on all the important issues of French society.

For example, during the sixteenth century, François Hotman (b. 1524), who lived during the wars of religion, found in the ancient German idea of a monarch who was responsible to his people a solution to the strife that plagued France. On the other side, Victor Cayet, who wrote a history of France for Henri IV, the absolutist Bourbon king who brought the religious wars to an end, responded to Hotman's work and averred that Hotman

scrimmaged with the old histories rightly and wrongly according to his passion. . . .
I leave it to the reader who has read. . . .
whether these wars were for the public good or for the private interests of so many nobles who took up arms at that time.13

In tracing the way the ideas of a French race were
treated from the time of Tacitus through the French Revolution in 1789, Barzun performs two services. The first is the strictly historical task of searching the sources, validating them, and then putting them together in an intelligible account. The second service is pedagogical. The reader of the book is presented with an example of "the free life that ideas lead when hatched." Ideas, their creators, and the circumstances -- the physical and social conditions surrounding the men and ideas -- all become a part of the story. It is clear that these all interact, although the precise nature of the interaction is a matter for the esprit de finesse to understand.

Even so wrenching an event as the French Revolution did not resolve the controversy. It was apparent to Barzun that nineteenth century discussions of the social problems were entangled with notions of "race, class, and soil," and, further, that these notions had taken on the coloring of empirical physical science, which had gained striking success during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The further adventures of the idea of race and science form the subject of the next books that Barzun wrote. To follow in a general way Barzun's continuation of the tale will provide an understanding of how Barzun works with historical materials.

By 1937, he had collected information which seemed to him to provide "a general review of Western culture in the
nineteenth century,17 the most important of which was published as Race: A Study in Modern Superstition.18 Where the first of Barzun's books bears the marks of a work directed toward scholars - careful critical apparatus, the reserved tone and careful circumscription of the topic and the faintly pedantic air of the whole production, Race is scholarly in that Barzun had obviously worked through the sources and has treated them according to the canons of verification of the historian, but the book is addressed to the general educated reader rather than the scholar. To this "general educated reader," Barzun gives an account of the facts which he had found during five years of research on the subject and which, it seemed from Barzun's reading and listening, were ignored by both sides of the arguments about race belief.19 Thus the book is popular in its attempt to address historically what must have appeared to that same general educated reader of 1937 an issue that had nothing antiquarian about it.20

These questions (of race) are not playthings of academic minds. Today no argument is needed to prove that race and the feelings connected with race are one of the powers shaping the world. One European nation of several million inhabitants is governed by men whose main policies involve certain hard-and-fast race-beliefs; another European nation not long since found it useful to whip up animosity against black-skinned men to help justify an imperialistic war.21

The fact that the book is directed toward clarifying the general reader's understanding of the story of race-belief's antecedents in nineteenth century culture, the nature of the
book is both historical and argumentative. The eleven chapters of the work are classified as "essays" rather than any of the other possible classifications. The arguments presented in the essays, it is clear, grow out of the history. The subject of the book seems to demand such a combination because the author is beginning with race thought as it is found in the present (1937) and thus the particular arguments shape his search for their antecedents and concomitants of whatever kind. The fact that the book is an attempt at cultural history demands "the necessarily rapid and continual shift of attention from politics, history-writing, and linguistics to art, philosophy, and anthropology." To begin with the reader's own understandings and to move from there to the antecedents of those understandings, and then to attempt to clarify them by referring to the underlying arguments and justifications, is to engage in a kind of conversation with the reader in which the attention of the author and the reader is on the question of "What difference do this new information and the possible interpretations of it make for thought about race?"

For example, race-thinking is associated with and justified by reference to science. The association between race and science is a cultural fact now as it was in 1937. In Race, Barzun begins with the fact and makes its examination a central theme in the book.
Those who had studied man, Barzun observes, had long recognized the physical differences apparent in the human group; the newly successful science of the seventeenth century appeared to give men a new and precise way of viewing such physical differences. Early investigators like Linné (Linnaeus) had linked physical characteristics precisely defined with moral traits defined with equal precision. Such correlations between the physical and the moral were thought to be a way to capture the elusiveness of human character by discovering its invariable links with the concrete and the visible. Dauberton, in 1764, demonstrated the relation between the varying angles at which the skull sat atop the spinal column and the different power of will that was discernible in the several races. Camper, in 1786, was able to describe precisely the beauty of the races by comparing facial angles with $100^\circ$ -- the standard of perfect beauty which he had determined by computing the facial angle of the ancient Greeks.$^{23}$

Barzun continues the story of the use of science in the study of race by moving from these early and naive attempts to the efforts of more sophisticated nineteenth century workers. In particular, he follows the great French anthropologist Paul Broca through the five volumes of his *Mémoires d'Anthropologie* as he worked to create a genuine science of man that would be as precise in its way as the science of Newton. Broca invented devices like craniometers with which
to measure the skulls of living and dead men and so capture the "chimera of race." In following Broca, Barzun is led into consideration of the specific details of Broca's work.

The measurement of skulls which was a key to Broca's science was full of hidden difficulties. The result of such measurement is called the cephalic index and is the product of dividing the length of the skull by its width, then multiplying that number by 100. A knotty difficulty arises when the anthropologist attempts to make an accurate determination of the length and width. When the attempt is made on the skulls of the living, the difficulty is compounded by the uneven thickness of the hair and tissues covering the bone. While that problem is eliminated in measuring the skulls of the dead ("dry measurement"), it turns out to be not much easier, because the natural irregularities of each skull make the placement of the craniometer problematic. As Barzun points out in a footnote, different techniques of measurement came to have political implications. The French and German anthropologists engaged in a minor controversy over such techniques because of the "'unfair' comparisons that resulted..."24 Nonetheless, anthropologists like Broca thought they succeeded in measuring skulls and in creating a scale that reflected the standard of measures. This scale, the cephalic index, begins with the lowest index and goes to 100 in increments of .001, as 77.100, 77.101, 77.102, and so on. The scale was to be used to describe the essential
characteristics of any skull by indicating which racial group the skull belonged to. But because the divisions of the scale were arbitrary and devised by each anthropologist to suit his own assumptions,

... the place of each skull in any one class was more and more uncertain at the edge of the series. Skull X, for instance, with a none too exact index of 81.34, might be brachy- with Broca and mesatic- with Mantegazza.25

In making the measurements -- the technical details of which also contained a number of assumptions hidden beneath the seeming precision of numbers -- the scientific anthropologist had made a number of assumptions: (1) that the incidental differences between human groups are basic differences, (2) that the brain has something to do with these differences and so measuring the skull will get at the important traits of the brain, and (3) that these measurements gave the investigator "positive facts" about the otherwise elusive nature of race.26 Barzun provides a case in point to illustrate how Broca worked. Taking 125 skulls that had been dug up opposite the Paris Palais de Justice, Broca determined that the skulls belonged to the twelfth century by their depth, and that their original possessors had been aristocrats by reason of the aristocratic nature of the district during the Middle Ages. He then took some 259 skulls that had been found in nineteenth century paupers' graves and measured both groups of skulls. Comparing the results, he
found a difference (that is expressed as being accurate to four-one-thousandths millimeters) between "the wealthy classes of the Middle Ages and the modern proletarians." 27

But, asks Barzun, what is the meaning of these "positive facts?" How well do the methods employed by Broca match the material he applied them to? Is race amenable to such statistical study? Barzun's answer is that there is a poor match between the methods and the material. He is not objecting to statistical study as a technique.

It is not the fault of statistics as a science, but of the thinking behind the statistics. When a farmer finds consistently that one orchard yields him more apples than another after he has expended the same care on both sets of similar fruit trees, he is justified in concluding that the land or the exposure to sunlight of one orchard is better than the other's. His conclusion, though crude, is probably sound because he has compared things identical save in the one respect at issue, and because he has counted apples. But what has Broca counted?

He started with skulls, of which he did not precisely know the origin; and then he went to diameters, which he reduced to cephalic indexes -- a purely arbitrary notion but one which we willingly accept, until we discover that the result is expressed in terms of twelfth century aristocrats and nineteenth century proletarians. We started with apples, as it were, and end up with complex social entities. 28

The quest for a method by which races could be sorted out according to physical characteristics represents a failure to accept the complexity of human beings, and is thereby a failure of mind. Instead of coming to grips with the complexity of human beings, others, like Broca, have avoided
the complexity by examining only that which appeared amenable to the methods. The subtitle of the book, "A Study in Modern Superstition," comes from the realization that race theorizing falls short of the ideal that the method of investigation should match and meet on its own terms the material being investigated, and substitutes for this ideal the "vulgar error" which
denies individual diversity, scouts the complexity of cause and effect, scorns the intellect, and ultimately bars Mind from the universe of created things. 29

Barzun's tracing of the uses to which the concept of race may be put makes apparent his way of working with historic materials. Beginning with an obscure reference to a theory of race found in Montesquieu, Barzun found that the reference reflected a lively dispute in Montesquieu's time and could be found alive and well in various versions through French history, from the days of the barbarian incursions into the Roman Empire. When he followed the idea of race forward into the nineteenth century, he discovered that he was dealing with a set of ideas that were found throughout Europe and were intimately entangled with European culture. He also discovered that part of this entanglement was with science, which appeared to provide a way to examine human beings as it had proved to be a way to examine physical nature. The issue of race in Barzun's understanding of Western culture, it begins to appear, is not a principal theme, but a subsidiary
one in the nineteenth century. Science, the principal issue, takes its place in Barzun's attempt to describe the cultural history of the West. The next book that will be considered examines science and Western culture by examining the work of three men who searched for a mechanical base for life, for politics, and for art -- Darwin, Marx, and Wagner.

**Darwin, Marx, and Wagner**

In the Preface to his *Darwin, Marx, and Wagner*, Barzun states his aim and his approach:

> This book has not three subjects, but one. That one is simply the prevailing form of our thinking in an age of scientism and machinery. To speak of forms of thought is of course to speak of abstractions; the living observer of living men finds only concrete situations and individual opinions. But amid the multitude of these single facts he may discern a family likeness. It is the contour of this likeness that I have tried to draw in the following pages, by giving a critical account of mechanistic materialism in science, art, and social science, from the days of its greatest apostles down to ours.

The "critical account" begins with the year 1859, the year that saw the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, and Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. These three works and men were chosen because, while the usual consensus is that each heralded a new way of viewing human experience, the familiar Darwinism, Marxism, and Wagnerism, Barzun asserts that an examination of the three will show that each stood at the end of a long and
suggestive tradition. Far from being the originators of new perspectives, each built on the work of unrecognized predecessors and each put together a system which, while not intellectually coherent, spoke to his contemporaries in comprehensible ways. Time has seen the transformation of the works into a part of the conventional wisdom, axiomatic to our thought about the issues of race, class, progress, and determinism. Speculation about important issues has been changed into the facts of the case.

It is Barzun's purpose to recapture the issues that have been "solved" by the three, and to show the issues as they appeared unresolved. These issues are important because they embrace the three relations that cause us our deepest concern -- science and religion; science and society; society and art -- and it is from Darwin, Marx, and Wagner that we have learned what we most familiarly know.31

The recovery begins by returning to 1859 and relating the events which surrounded the three important publications. The story is completed by a search for the antecedents and the issues of the publications.32

The account of the recovery is tightly organized into five main sections, one for each of the principals -- each section in turn divided into seven chapters -- and two concluding sections which are essays on the main themes of the
study. If Darwin, Marx, and Wagner are linked because the doctrine espoused and nurtured by each "can be seen as the crystallization of whole century's beliefs," then the organization of the book into three sections each exhibiting one facet of the crystal is appropriate. The tight organization of the book does not aim to reduce the lively interplay of idea and circumstance to a ballet, but such organization is needed to give shape to the chaos of events and make it intelligible to a point. Barzun does not organize and describe the events by a neat system; rather, the organization is meant to give the story intelligibility without losing the lively unintelligibility of the events.

The events are recounted under seven headings: 1) the circumstances that surrounded the publication of each of the three works, along with a summary of the contents of each, 2) the background of the principal ideas of each work, along with an account of the often unacknowledged intellectual ancestors of the ideas, 3) a discussion of how the system proposed by each of the protagonists works, 4) the works subjected to a critical examination, a kind of retrospective book review, 5) the uses to which each of the works was put by followers and contemporaries, 6) the voices of dissent that appeared during the heyday of each, and 7) a summary of the effect and influence that each had: "After Darwin: What is Science?", "After Marx: What is Social Science?", "After Wagner: What is Art?"
A principal resource for the cultural historian is the possession of a sturdy imagination, the ability to recall the distant reality as suggested by the irreducible and stubborn facts. Barzun's *Darwin, Marx, Wagner* demands the resource because the task of the book is to go around what is 'known' now and find what was the case.

Conventional wisdom tells that 1859 saw the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* and that the importance of the book was in bringing Evolution to the attention of nineteenth century man. But, according to Barzun, Darwin was arguing only indirectly for evolution. "He was proposing merely to explain the mechanism by which such modifications of development or evolution might occur." In fact, the general acceptance of evolution had already taken place in geology. Rather than the promulgation of the theory of evolution, the book contained instead the organization of "biological observations and evolutionary ideas around the central fact of natural selection." At one time, in fact, Barzun points out that Darwin even considered calling his book *Natural Selection*.

The controversy that resulted from the publication was not simply, as the textbooks claim, for or against Darwin. And the fact of the controversy was at least in part Darwin's fault, because he turns out to be a writer whose prose is so tangled that a number of different readings may be given to
important passages. A case in point is Darwin's statement that a change of species

has been effected chiefly through the natu­
ral selection of numerous, successive, slight, favorable variations; aided in an important manner by the inherited effects of use and disuse of parts, and in an unimportant manner - - that is, in relation to adaptive struc­
tures, whether past or present - - by the di­rect action of external conditions, and by variations which seem in our ignorance to arise spontaneously. It appears that I for­
merly underrated the frequency and value of these latter forms of variation, as leading to permanent modifications of structure inde­
dependently of natural selection.

This Barzun construes as follows:

a. change of species is effected mainly by
the accumulation of spontaneous varia­
tions,
b. aided by the inherited effects of use and
 disuse (important), and of direct action
(unimportant),
c. as well as by spontaneous variations (un­
important),
d. I formerly underrated these last varia­
tions,
e. I still think them unimportant (state­
ment c.).

The matter of the book is confused as to what theory Darwin meant by "my theory," evolution or natural selection.
In fact, the book is less an account of a particular theory or even of a single idea. "It was rather a cluster of ideas, a subject matter and not a theory."40

The originality of the theory of evolution is examined by looking for its antecedents in the eighteenth century.
Barzun discovers that a whole set of evolutionary ideas had seethed. There was Vico's evolutinary ideas and Montesquieu's attempt to find the natural laws that would explain human affairs. In science, Leibnitz set himself the task of finding a world system that was not static and fixed, in contradiction to those of Descartes and Newton. He founded a system that included

the fact of change and presupposed in all things an inherent perfecting principle . . . At any given time the world was as perfect as it could possibly be, exactly as in the Origin of Species.\(^1\)

In biology (a word, Barzun reminds us, which was not proposed until 1802), Buffon, despite the conservatism of the Sorbonne and the Court,

went so far as to hint of a means whereby species might change their form. He spoke of favoring and disfavoring circumstances in the environment, and enunciated the principle of a struggle for life which results from the discrepancy between animal fertility and a limited supply of food.\(^2\)

Barzun relates the story of Lamarck with his idea of use-inheritance as well as that of Darwin's grandfather Erasmus, who

had arrived independently of Lamarck at the conclusion that species evolve, and had even gone farther than he in analyzing the process. . . Erasmus Darwin anticipated many nineteenth century ideas, such as the unity of parent and offspring, the continuity of instinct as buried memory, as well as the theory known in his grandson's work as sexual selection.\(^3\)
There is also Auguste Comte, whose Positivism is at once "an evolutionary view of the past, an ordered scheme for the sciences, and a sociological creed." In 1844, Robert Chambers' *The Vestiges of Creation* presaged the furor over Darwin's work by setting forth a survey of "the entire field of evolutionary speculation, including the inorganic world of astronomy and geology as well as living things." Finally, there is the great poem by Tennyson which was written between 1833 and 1850. As Barzun suggests, anyone who would gauge the familiarity of the European mind with evolutionary ideas before Darwin need do no more than reread... In *Memoriam*. There he will find not only the "Nature red in tooth and claw" of natural selection, but likewise man's kinship with the ape, the chain of beings, their development, and the consequences to religion and morals of the thoroughgoing naturalism of science.

It was less that Darwin's *Origin* had put something new into the European mind than what "it brought seething out of it." Darwin's contribution was to state a set of ideas which had lingered in the wings, but whose time had now come. And it was Darwin's fortune to have stated these ideas when time was ripe for their acceptance. There was Thomas Henry Huxley, who had reviewed the book in the *Times*, and for years ably debated the issues:

Earlier, as the example of Darwin's grandfather shows, a new scientific theory would have reached but a very small circle of readers. Later, it would have been lost amid the clatter of front page headlines.
In the middle of Victoria's reign, however, press and public were in the right mood for the close and protracted discussion of ideas. The readers of that era . . . sustained themselves on fifty-page book reviews of new books, exhaustive surveys of public questions, and party polemics whose weight could be measured on the open palm. Popular science of a high order was in demand, and it was still permissible, in dealing with science, to consider its philosophic bearing. Moreover, the leadership of the various sections of the press was remarkably unified in the hands of an elite.47

In sum, Barzun's description of the work of each of the three culture heroes -- Darwin, Marx, and Wagner -- is an attempt to cut through the tangled growth of opinion surrounding each and to recapture what each was doing in relation to his intellectual forebears and society, and to show what each contributed to Western culture. The historical-pedagogical thrust of cultural history is shown in Barzun's attempt to inform and to give thought to what has been presented.

An example of how the tone of the book echoes Barzun's informative-pedagogical purpose is found in the section describing the relation between Marx and Proudhon. In discussions of the two it is common to criticize Proudhon by reciting the criticisms that Marx used against him. Barzun tries to examine Proudhon's own work on its own terms and judge it from as broad a perspective as possible, and not simply as Marx saw it. He describes the contrasting views of Capital
and Labor held by the two:

Proudhon shows that Capital and Labor, though at daggers drawn, are not antitheses. Labor becomes capital; capital feeds and furthers labor, and the two are the beginning and the end of one human process, falsely abstracted into two warring principles. Marx naturally calls this sophistry, because he thinks that Proudhon is blinking the evil effects of accumulated capital upon poverty-stricken labor. But as a self-educated cowherd of the poorest class, Proudhon knew a good deal more than Marx about the poor workman's lot in France, and he felt no need to 'prove' the evils of the Capital-Labor relation, no need of two theories of value.48

Barzun is not demonstrating the truth of his assertions; he is rather working to influence the reader by giving him information that has been lost or forgotten, and then by suggesting what this might mean to the understanding of the event. It matters less whether the reader adopts the suggestion than whether he sees that set of events in a new way.49

Barzun's suggestion about the understanding which he has formulated out of the events which he has described is found in the two concluding sections of the book. The heritage of the nineteenth century, he asserts, is a kind of absolutism that reduces all events to mere mechanism.

All events had physical origins; physical origins were discoverable by science; and the method of science alone could, by revealing the nature of things, make the mechanical sequences of nature beneficent to man.50

In its search for the essential mechanisms, science needed to banish all anthropomorphic ideas, and the chief of
these is the human mind. With its elimination from serious consideration, the nineteenth century was left with the blind play of forces rather than with purposeful activity. Darwin crystallized the notion for biology, the elements of which had been "in the air." Marx took the notion and applied it to history, making that the study of the dialectical forces and of the classes which each possessed biological motives. Wagner applied the evolutionary struggle to art and identified his music with the final stage in that progress. But, as Barzun has tried to show, the discovery was not of an essential fact but the formulation of a new metaphysics that has incorporated itself into our culture.

The examination of the events of 1859, and their antecedents and their issues, shows that the culture is more complex and various, because there were dissenters who denied the purely mechanical determinism and who found support for their dissent in the new physics. For G. H. Lewes, J. S. Haldane, William James, Freud, Planck, Einstein, the absolutes were going down one by one before statements of relations. The observer as a mind, a fact, a reality, was re-entering the universe from which he had excluded himself lest the cosmos appear anthropomorphic. Barzun's attraction to these dissenters is their attachment to the chaos of verified fact and their attempt to understand it without simplifying it by finding a primary fact from which all the rest may be derived. Put another way, the dissenters were being true to what Barzun sees as the
historical reality in which the deeds and acts of men cannot be understood or truthfully described except by accounting for them as they are. Such a demand places a burden on the man who would attempt to understand culture. Along with the burden comes a benefit, because the view seems to preclude any final answers and thus opens the possibility for novelty, for new beginnings; within certain limits, fatality and automatism are themselves products of human thought and the pronouncements made from their perspective are not inevitable.

Nothing lasts forever, nothing "wins out in the end." There is always a rebeginning, and even if we ourselves do not learn in time the knack of living together in large numbers, and solving the problems that our best gifts create, at least the future archaeologist will find it written that our century, coming after a time of systematic mechanism, proclaimed in a hundred ways that men have minds, and that purposeless work is not for the sane.53

A Summary View

Barzun's cultural history then is the attempt to examine not only the events of history, but also those pictures in the minds of those participating in those events. In the three examples cited here, Barzun has traced the idea of race-thinking in eighteenth century France back to its distant roots, and then brought the story through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He then picked up the thread of what he sees as a set of fundamental ideas in Western culture. The thread showed itself in race-thinking,
but also informs thought about science, social science and the arts.

Further exploration of Barzun's cultural history would take us to *Classic, Romantic, and Modern* (first published in 1943 as *Romanticism and the Modern Ego*), in which he examines the Romantic movement in politics and art as it was an attempt in the first part of the nineteenth century to re-establish a pluralistic conception of human nature after the various attempts in the eighteenth century to formulate a unitary view of human nature and the universe. In Barzun's view, the Romantics were neither the idolators of moonshine nor the forerunners of fascism. This study of Romantic life and art shows that the Romantics were continuously and energetically interested in dreams, not because they were seeking to escape the harsh reality, but because dreams are a fact of life. The Romantics were interested in the fact of belief more than in the substance of that belief and they were interested in the beliefs of people because they were interested in finding all the variety that could be found in people.

Whatever one may think of the results achieved, it is a fact beyond dispute that the romantic artists worked like scientific researchers. Their note books, their critical writings, their letters, their treatises on composition are there to testify that technique was to them as important as subject matter. Indeed, they asserted the old truth that the distinction between the two is one for the critic rather than the creator.
In this desire to know mankind, the romantics were realists because they were loath to sacrifice the rich diversity of life for the sake of a single simple system.

In Berlioz and the Romantic Century, Barzun attempted a full-scale study of the romantics by reconstructing "the cultural image of an entire age." Once again, Barzun's work began with his discomfort with what was said about Berlioz's music: "I found that what I read seldom tallied with what I heard." He entered the "jungle" of Berlioz criticism and attempted to separate the verified facts from the argument and counter-argument that had come to be accepted as fact. To do this meant that Barzun had to examine the culture in which Berlioz lived. In the separation of verified fact from opinion, Barzun does not claim to have produced a book of fact; interpretation is inseparable from history. The mixture is in fact healthy.

For although the unprejudiced reader dislikes argument, preferring the dogmatic tone as more authoritative, it is neither possible nor healthy that he should be indulged in this. The life of ideas thrives on conflict, and good history, as Shaw points out, is mainly recrimination. It is rarely possible to arrive at desired truths without opposition and dispute, and one finds hardly any current biography of the great -- were one to go back as far as Euripides -- which does not open with fighting words. Given Berlioz' rating in the many works that still indoctrinate young and old, the traditional processes of controversy remain unavoidable and the reader must grow inured to them.
The aim of this book is to some extent the aim of all of Barzun's work:

It is "to help Berlioz' admirers know where they are; it is also, and to an equal degree, a manual which may enable Berlioz' detractors to damn him intelligently." 59

These five works may be grouped together as contributions to the cultural history of the West since 1750. In another series of works which Barzun classifies as "criticism" he takes the same subject, but begins with his own time and attempts to sort out important features of the contemporary culture.

In 1939, he published a series of essays under the title Of Human Freedom. The essays give thought to politics, art, science, education, and revolution viewed in the light of cultural history. It is a defence of democracy which is the best way to live in a pluralistic world in which there are no universal churches, no single remedy for all diseases, no one way to teach or write or sing, no magic diet that will make everyone healthy and happy, no world poets and no chosen races cut to one pattern or virtue, but only the wretched and wonderfully diversified human race which can live and build and leave cultural traces of its passage in a world that was apparently not fashioned for the purpose. 60

In 1945, came Teacher in America, which deals with teaching and the potentials and limitations of education. In 1954, he wrote God's Country and Mine, a study of his
adopted country. In 1956, he published a series of articles called *The Energies of Art*. In 1959, he examined the state and condition of intellect in the West in *The House of Intellect*. *Science: The Glorious Entertainment* (1964) is Barzun's attempt to bring Whitehead's classic *Science and the Modern World* up to date not in the sense of supplanting it but to describe the present "curse of abstraction, the burden of pullulating fact." In 1968, then newly retired from Columbia, he published *The American University*. History, its nature and its enemies is the subject of *Clio and the Doctors: Psycho-History, Quanto-History and History* (1974). That same year, Barzun gave the Mellon Lectures at the National Gallery in Washington, and these were published as *The Use and Abuse of Art*.

Some generalizations about Barzun's cultural history are now possible. First, his theme may be summarized by a quotation from Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* (1929) - which the nineteen-year-old Barzun had read with the effect of "a vision." Whitehead closes his book by saying that he has tried to

give a record of the great adventure in the region of thought. It was shared in by all the races of western Europe. It developed with the slowness of a mass movement. Half a century is its unit of time. The tale is the epic of an episode in the manifestation of reason. It tells how a particular direction of reason emerges in a race by the long preparation of antecedent epochs, how
after its birth its subject-matter gradually unfolds itself, how it attains its triumphs, how its influences mould the very springs of action of mankind, and finally how at its moment of supreme suggest its limitations disclose themselves and call for a renewed exercise of the creative imagination. 62

Cultural history is a way for us to "clear our heads" for that renewed "exercise of the creative imagination." Cultural history is Barzun's way to send the interested citizen back to look carefully at the antecedents and concomitants of present belief and practice. He has discovered, and he believes, that the ordinary educated man will also discover through such a journey, that what appears to be a brute fact, a given of the culture, is in reality a set of beliefs that began as an attempt to describe certain facts but which have since hardened and lost their tentativeness. Cultural history is a way to unlimber the situation from the sclerous, incrusted opinions, not with the aim of eliminating belief or opinion but to freshen them and make them work for human purpose. The exploration of the verified past gives us the ability to take

the world around (us) with the same freedom
that men have ever had: the ways are
blocked or open in different places but
judgment remains sovereign. 63

Cultural history's examination of the past demands that Mind be returned to the consideration of human affairs. The human mind shows itself in many modes and no single mode or combination of them exhausts the possibilities or entirely meets
the case at hand. The only answer is to approach experience with a willingness to constantly revise one's theory and one's truth in the light of all the facts -- and these include the tangible embodiments of feelings and the "haunting presences of nature." 64

Thus (and this is the second generalization) while Barzun can be criticized that his history is "romantic" and that his cultural history is really Cultural history, 65 such criticism misses the point of Barzun's work, which is less to establish the technical facts of the case, and thereby add to the encyclopedia of historical fact, than it is "history as general education" -- the attempt to give an intelligible account of man as a thinking being to the interested educated person, and then to spur that person to the exercise of his own imagination of the real. To read Barzun is to find that, as David Daiches remarked, "agreement (is) satisfying and disagreement fruitful." 67

Our next task will be to show how Barzun has examined in the light of his historical work, one facet of Western culture: education.
CHAPTER TWO

Footnotes


6 Barzun, "Imagination," p. 5

7 The phrase "imagination of the real" is found first in Barzun's work in Darwin, Marx, Wagner 2nd ed. (1941; rpt. New York: Anchor, 1958), p. 175. It means the ability to understand other humans: "With his sturdy energetic nature, full of repressed resentments, lacking the imagination of the real, and hence ignorant of the feelings of those not living under his own roof, it would have been surprising had Marx been more just to others or to himself."


12 Charles Louis de Secondat de Montesquieu (1689-1755) wrote *De l'Esprit des lois* in 1748.


16 Barzun, "Imagination," p. 4.


19 Barzun, *Race*, pp. ix-x


For example, here is a description of Darwin's work found in H. A. Clement, The Story of Britain, Vol. II (London: Harrap, 1961):

In 1859 Charles Darwin published The Origin of Species, in which he argued that different species of life had evolved because they had been better equipped than their rivals in the struggle for existence. ... Evolution through 'survival of the fittest' conflicted with the account of special creation as given in Genesis, and a sharp controversy resulted. (p.

42 Barzun, Darwin, pp. 41-42.
43 Barzun, Darwin, p. 45.
44 Barzun, Darwin, p. 49.
45 Barzun, Darwin, pp. 53-54.
46 Barzun, Darwin, p. 55.
47 Barzun, Darwin, p. 31.
48 Barzun, Darwin, p. 207.
50 Barzun, Darwin, p. 322.
51 Barzun, Darwin, pp. 322-323.
52 Barzun, Darwin, p. 347
53 Barzun, Darwin, p. 362.
56 Barzun, Darwin, p. xiv.
57 Barzun, Berlioz, p. 4.
58 Barzun, Berlioz, p. 17.
59 Barzun, Berlioz, p. 16.
60 Barzun, Freedom, p. 277.
61 Barzun, Science, p. 5.


CHAPTER THREE

Barzun's Criticism of Education

The question which the pragmatic historian asks is "What difference does this make to my thinking?" Barzun has asked this question about his understanding of Western culture as it touches issues of concern to the contemporary scene. The answers that he has given may be found in the works which he describes as "Criticism." These works have addressed issues of art, science, politics, and education. The concern of this chapter will be the examination of Barzun's critical work as it addresses the educational enterprise in contemporary culture.

The Critic's Task

The goal of the historian is to provide the reader with a coherent picture of the past, to imagine the distant reality, so that the reader may enter into past states of mind while recalling his own.  The critic's task, on the other hand, is to direct the attention of the reader to his own time. The critic desires less to demonstrate that such and such a judgment is true than he is to influence the reader to
return to his beliefs and understandings and re-examine them.

One of the head quotations chosen by Barzun for his collection of critical pieces, *The Energies of Art*, is by John Jay Chapman:

So long as a man is trying to tell the truth, his remarks will contain a margin which other people will regard as mystifying and irritating exaggeration. It is this very margin of controversy that does the work.

The margin of controversy -- the margin of the critic's work that seems irritating and exaggerated -- will include those conventional opinions that have become to seem fact itself. Thus the critic is seen not as attacking a set of opinions but as attacking the substance of fact itself. We have seen how close Barzun the historian comes to fitting this definition of Barzun the critic in, for example, *Darwin*, *Marx*, *Wagner*, in which Barzun attempts to go behind the presently accepted body of facts surrounding the three heroes to sort them out into fact and opinion (without, of course, making so clumsy a distinction between the two categories). The critical work can be distinguished from the historical in Barzun by the emphasis it has. While both contain elements of the other -- after all, the historian's task is "at once description, analysis, and comparison"\(^2\) -- the critic attends most carefully to the present reality, while the historian attends to the distant or past reality. Barzun as critic and as historian finds in the record of the past the principal set of data for both the criticism and the cultural history,
because, quite simply, he is interested in knowing about the human adventure.

Perhaps the historical lesson that most informs Barzun's criticism is not that there is no single lesson to be gained from history, but that history shows human experience as irreducible except to the most general and experimental categories and abstractions of thought. Thus, for him the chief sin (to use an inappropriate eschatological metaphor) is to search for the "rule of thumb that would answer for every purpose" -- to look for shortcuts to "happiness and peace." In this graceless state, "we were willing to join a party, sign a pledge, even enlist in an army, provided it was guaranteed to bring about the end of our troubles, by which we really meant make the claim on our intelligence." The sin is to ignore the tentative and experimental nature of our categories, abstractions, descriptions of "the way things are" and to allow them to harden into some form of more or less solid truth.

The critic's task is to "go over our commonest assumptions about familiar things, scrape the rust off many of our habitual opinions and see if there is any bright metal beneath, or only an oxidized mass of crumbling prejudices."
The Method of the Critic

The critic, like the historian, has no method except in the loose sense of being careful and conscientious. But while there is no method, there is a spirit which moves him, and that is history. Abundant delving in history frees the mind to work as it works best — that is, as it is able to "distinguish differences and to deal with each appropriately." The historical delving spirit unconfines the critic by enabling him to find examples in history that "bend or bulge whatever is too rigid or narrow." The spirit of history thus permits the critic to observe the circumstances, events, opinions that are the antecedents of the present set of opinions, attitudes, circumstances. Such a freeing permits "the recovery of the object" and "reminds us of lost meaning, complex motive, and material relationship."

The methodless nature of the critic's task means that the critic has a special relationship with his reader. Because his goal is not to demonstrate or prove in the geometrical or logical sense, but to influence, the critic cannot coerce the reader into assent by showing that the two sides of the equation balance. Neither is the critic in the position of intellectual demagogue, who can play on the emotions and feelings of the reader. The precise nature of the relationship between critic and reader, as Barzun conceives
it, may be seen in the "Preface" to his Race (1937).

Two things compelled Barzun to publish the results of his five years' study on the origins of race-thinking. First, although the writing had been completed a year before publication, Barzun had "thought twice" about adding another work that seems to "tell the rest of the world how it should think and behave." The first reason for publication was to repay the debt owed to the American Council of Learned Societies, which had subsidized some of Barzun's travel and reading. Second, in reading or in conversation with friends, Barzun found that he was often in "possession of facts that seemed to be overlooked in the arguments both for and against race-beliefs." The possession he felt to be "both a burden and a responsibility." Clearly, Barzun the critic is saying to his reader, "I have taken the trouble to inform myself historically about this and I have also thought about what I have found — here is the result of those labors. Knowing this, what do you now think?

In his "Introduction" to Berlioz and the Romantic Century (1950), written some twenty-three years after Race, Barzun is still conceiving the role of the critic-historian in the same way. Once again he describes his large work about Berlioz as serving a number of different functions. One of these is to serve as a "Handbook for Friends and Detractors." All art and all artists live amid a critical
dissensus, and Barzun avers that he would not change that by propagandizing Berlioz's genius. The only legitimate argument for Berlioz's music is that music itself. But "It is desirable for all concerned that the endless battle of opinions should be as efficient as possible" -- the book is "to help Berlioz's admirers 'know where they are; it is also, and in equal degree, a manual which may enable Berlioz's detractors to damn him intelligently." 9

Thus the critic is not a man expressing his indignation and resentment, and thereby giving voice to the indignation and resentment of those readers who are sympathetic to the critic's own prejudices. Indignation and resentment, says Barzun, "give comfort too cheaply; they rot judgment, and by encouraging passivity they come to require that evil continue for the sake of the grievance to be enjoyed." 10 Part of the critic's responsibility to the reader is, therefore, not to give comfort cheaply by pandering to habitual opinions and prejudices. The critic aims at spurring thought. "for the aim of the critic, beyond that of saying what he thinks, is to make two thoughts grow where only one grew before." 11

In his turn, the reader owes the critic attention and the willingness "to lend his mind to attitudes that may seem dubious coming from one who lays no claim to being an expert." The reader follows the argument and in his turn acts as a critic "in the degree of his ability, provided he uses his
PLEASE NOTE:

This page not included with original material. Filmed as received.

University Microfilms International
adopted land.

*The Energies of Art and Music in American Life* both appeared in 1956 and address the subjects suggested in the titles. In 1957, Barzun edited a selection of works of John Jay Chapman, the American man of letters of the late nineteenth century, and wrote a critical introduction which appeared in *John Jay Chapman: Writings*. In 1959, he published *The House of Intellect*, in which he addresses the state of the intellect in contemporary America. Two series of lectures, one the Marfleet Lectures (March, 1960) at the University of Toronto, and another series given at Cambridge University (May, 1963) gave Barzun the opportunity to develop in public the ideas about science and the present state of culture that were set forth in *Science: The Glorious Entertainment* (1964). Out of his long experience at Columbia College and Columbia University came *The American University* (1968, 1970). In 1974, Barzun's critical evaluation of the "New History" of quanto-history, psycho-history, was published in *Clio and the Doctors*. Barzun gave the Mellon Lectures at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. These were published in the Bollingen Series XXV, 22, 1974, as *The Use and Abuse of Art*.

The interest in the present chapter is with Barzun's critical work that touches educational issues. The central fact that compulsory free schooling has been part of western
culture for well over a century is where Barzun begins his talk about education. Compulsory education in its turn was a part of the "great emancipation promoted in the eighteenth century" that brought with it not only mass literacy but mass political participation and mass participation in the production and consumption of wealth. Further, Barzun asserts we are in the last stages of the great emancipation in which the flaws in the original assumptions about that emancipation are becoming clear -- and, ironically, clear to a very large portion of the culture, because of the emancipation itself. Democratic education, eighteenth and nineteenth century liberal thinkers believed, would be the solid foundation on which orderly government and a happy social structure could be built. So the experiment of compulsory education was begun enthusiastically and broadly supported.

And the effort still continues, though with growing dismay. For it now appears that education too has its limits. Literacy cannot be spread indefinitely but turns its back on itself; teachers cannot be mass-produced at will like cars; and worst blow of all, the beneficiaries of free schooling resist or scorn the benefit. Accordingly, the latest 'solution' offered the once-hopeful world is: 'de-schooling society.' It sounds like a new-found freedom."

Further, it is clear that, in addition to the special difficulties attending universal public schooling, contemporary education also must face the contradiction that attends any system of education in any society. A school tries to
meet the conflicting demands of the present and the future. Students must be prepared for the world as it is and for a better world tomorrow. This intimate connection between the school and its culture and the fact that the school is run by adults to satisfy other adults means that the forces operating at once on the school and its society are like a tangled ball of yarn the ends of which are lost. Change or modification of the school or the society becomes a daunting proposition. The intrusion into the schools by the culture -- of teachers "marred by the ugly world and children already stamped with the defects that their parents condone by habit or foster on principle" -- means for Barzun that there is, "there can be, no such thing as a good school." He does not deny that some schools are better than others, but in any discussion of education, it must be remembered that it is only naive fancy that conceives of "an instrument of precision functioning independently of its makers."  

Instead of such a precision instrument, we have schools established around one or another system -- harshly Gradgrindian at one end or Summerhillian at the other. Therefore, instead of the precise instrument, we have a "cookie cutter carelessly handled . . ." But when he looks at the educational scene and listens to the best voices there, he finds talk that, while worried in tone, deals with either "what is broad" or "what is creative." "A visitor from
outer space would conclude that we had lost, or perhaps never formed, any communicable idea of the purpose of schools."21

Barzun: The Critic as Fox

In an essay about Tolstoy, Sir Isaiah Berlin recalls a line from the fragmentary literary remains of the Greek poet Archilochus (c. 753-716 B.C.). "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." Berlin takes the gnomic lines figuratively and suggests that

they mark one of the deepest differences which divide writers and thinkers, and, it may be, human beings in general. For there exists a great chasm between those, on one side, who relate everything to a single central vision, one system less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel -- a single, universal, organizing principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance -- and, on the other side, those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some de facto way. ... These last lead lives, perform acts, and entertain ideas that are centrifugal rather than centripetal, their thought is scattered and diffused, moving on many levels, seizing upon the essence of a vast variety of experiences and objects for what they are in themselves. ...22

Berlin goes on to group Dante, Plato, Pascal, Hegel in the company of hedgehogs; he places Chakespeare, Aristotle, Montaigne, Erasmus, and Balzac in the grouping of foxes. It is fair to place Barzun with the foxes. Nowhere is this more clear than in his educational criticism, and it appears immediately when one attempts to label Barzun -- -- Progressive,
Neo-Aristotelian, Thomist, or Conservative. Labels fail to hold. It is difficult to identify him with any of these camps. No single way of approaching the subject fits. Rather, the generalization that might be made of his work is to say simply that he takes notions about education and plays with them, turns them around, describes them as they are seen from what is usually the dark side, carries each notion to its logical outcomes, and sees what other ideas are genetically linked with it.

Recalling an event which took place not long before the appearance of his essay "What Every School Boy Knows: a Mystery," Barzun finds in the protest by parents in a town near New York of a course that taught, among other things, bread-baking to boys a "very useful controversy." The reports of the protest suggested that it signaled an attack on Progressive Education, but Barzun suggests that it raises a deeper issue that is connected with the central fact of compulsory schooling and the emancipatory dream which created it: "what form of education affords an adequate preparation for modern life in a democracy?" It is instructive to look at how Barzun uses the controversy to explore some notions of contemporary education.

Among the various answers that were current in the late 1930's, Barzun identifies two general movements which he finds important because of their recognition of the "social
implications of teaching" -- Progressive Education and the
"Return to the Classics." Whether Barzun was correct in his
assessment that these movements "are likely to command the
future of American schools" is of less importance than his
discussion of each movement. Progressive Education is linked
not just with American education of the past century, but
with educational reformers from Plato on down who recognized
"that any education worth the name must make of each pupil a
self-propelling individual who not only has learned but can
continue to learn. In Aristotle's homely phrase, to educate
is not to present the student with a pair of shoes, but to
impart to him the art of shoemaking." The modern addition
to the age-old desire to fit education to the needs of the
whole man has been "the paraphernalia of child psychology,
psychoanalysis, mental hygiene, and social statistics."

That progressive education aims at making education
sweet and delightful raises one of the intrinsic conflicts be-
tween a school and its society which believes "that drudg-
erly, discipline, and conformity are the social virtues par
excellence." So the school attempts both to "pour in the
current culture and at the same time mould young minds by re-
warding the virtues that run counter to the cultural current."
Further, the progressive educator faces three complications
endemic to schools: while child problems are perhaps solu-
ble, the problem child himself is a "dynamic fact" who has
a plastic mind that is "wonderfully resistant to the introduction of knowledge and the injunction to think; a school is not a solid impersonal block" but rather a group of individual teachers who see the pupils in different ways and turn any program into a variety of programs; finally, the school is part of society and is under the influence of various groups each wanting something somewhat different for the pupils. 26

However, given these drawbacks and complexities, progressive education must seem, notes Barzun, to be the ideal form of education in a democracy, because it tolerates and even encourages diversity. But too much diversity can actually be destructive of democratic ideals because it leads to destruction of community —

one-man, one-world, with no links tying him to other men and worlds. We all go to school, learn this and that, and issue forth as adults completely convinced that what we know everybody knows. Consequently our neighbor must be in bad faith, must be a self-seeking egoist, when he disagrees with us and opposes our excellent plan.27

What is needed, therefore, is a common background, point out men like Robert Hutchins, and the classics as gathered into the Great Books of the Western World are, therefore, the answer to the initial question regarding the best preparation for life in a democracy.
The classics, the humanities, give answer to the pedagogical question about the aims of education that was ignored by the artists, social scientists and natural scientists when the natural and social sciences and the arts entered the curriculum in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Instead of teaching these subjects with the goal of producing educated men who are knowledgeable about art and science, scientists and artists have merely worked to produce more scientists and artists. The humanities answer the question differently.

They teach, taking superficial benefits first, the use of common words and references. An educated man should be able to use the shorthand of thought furnished by literature and history. He should understand what is meant by a Gordian knot or le mot juste, and he ought not to think the Copernican Revolution was a Polish uprising. He should know these not from a Handbook of Culture . . . but from first-hand familiarity with the context, for it is the context, not the word, that matters. 28

More important is the fact that emerges from a study of the classics of the continuity of culture and the "persistence of social and intellectual problems." Finally, and most importantly, the humanities put the human first, and thus are worthy of the study of man where other studies are appropriate for man the scholar or man the engineer.

For Barzun, the contrast between the two movements is clear. Classical education is directed toward producing an elite, not of birth or wealth, but of education. This elite
will "know how to think, how to live, and possibly how to

govern." Progressive education is directed toward the crea-
tion of an egalitarian democracy, beginning with the pupil

as it finds him, discovers his wishes and
gifts and tries to equip him for a life of
art, science, journalism, or business --
almost any kind of life except a life of
crime. At the same time, progressive edu-
cation would slowly remould society by al-
tering the individual's response to it,
making him more cooperative, more tolerant,
more diversified in his interests." 29

Barzun takes the stance of the outsider, the concerned
citizen, who has taken the trouble to inform himself, and
from this base critically examines both movements. He seems
to be asking, what are the possible weaknesses of each, given
the aims expressed by each?

In progressive education, the apparent weaknesses are in
its potential over-emphasis on individuality, and the real
difficulties that anyone faces when attempting "to educate
the whole man," particularly when in that attempt the name of
science is invoked, since "there is no single science of psy-
chology and no absolute science of medicine." The invocation
of science also brings the charge that progressive education
falls victim to scientism -- the use of the form and language
of science to validate an enterprise or an opinion. This
shows itself in the transformation of ordinary things like
books, pictures and music into "exploratory materials." A
student does not get better, he "adjusts"; nor does poise
improve—"security solidifies."

The grandeur of the task of the education of the whole person has unfortunate effects on the teachers.

They cannot be at once teachers, Psychiatrists, medical men, and social reformers. Hence they waste precious time whenever they are fretting themselves and their charges over questions which are social in origin and which no teacher and no school can solve single-handedly.

That a teacher should even attempt to inculcate one or another social reform just as he would inculcate arithmetic, Barzun anathemizes as a "Jehovah-complex." But finally, he also recognizes that many of the fine graduates of progressive colleges have in fact acquired knowledge, poise, confidence. Such a fact proves the possibilities of progressive education, but, asserts Barzun, if such colleges do educate . . . it is because the students have been for four years under the care, not of doctors and psychologists, or even of 'educators,' but of teachers—men and women whose interest is in the life of the mind fully as much as in the life of the young. The teachers have no doubt thought much about problems and methods of education, but they feel that their first duty is to teach.

To support the contention that Barzun's criticism of progressive education is not simply an attack on "what I do not do in my own teaching," Alfred Kazin, the American teacher and literary critic, may be called as a witness. He attended Columbia in the middle of the 1930's when Barzun was a new professor teaching Humanities A1, and he has maintained
contact with Columbia to the present day. In his autobiographical account, *New York Jew*, Kazin tells how, while some of the staider members of the Columbia faculty could be easily frightened by the young intellectuals of the 1950's - - Allen Ginsburg, Norman Podhoretz, Jack Kerouac, and Steven Marcus - -

these young intellectuals also knew that in (Lionel) Trilling, Jacques Barzun, Mark Van Doren, Andrew Chiappe, Meyer Schapiro, Richard Hofstadter, (and) I. I. Rabi ... they had the most emancipated and creative faculty in America.

If progressive education sometimes borders on "slovenly superficiality," the humanistic Neo-Aristotelian dream can border on "formal stuffing." Not only can the alleged medieval unity which is averred to be the foundation of the humanist education be attacked:

Medieval opinions ranged all the way from pantheism to rationalism, and from mysticism to materialism, very much as ours do. Looking at our own intellectual scene from the outside would give an equally unified picture, for we all hash over the same points and quote over and over the same authorities.

But the besetting difficulty with the humanist education is the same, in order if not in kind, as that which beset the progressives. Because interpretation of the common Great Books would naturally lead to diversity instead of to unity (the lesson the medieval Catholic Church recognized, but which the Protestants did not), some system is needed so
that the interpretation will result in a truly common knowledge; it is the system which Barzun finds at the root of the "formal stuffing." And in a way, the nature of the neo-Thomist and Aristotelian system is more deeply contrary to Barzun's sense of what things are like.

The system -- and it is an appeal that fascism and communism likewise possess -- fills two very great emotional needs of the young. It provides certainty, in more or less close alliance with religion; and it offers a general method enabling the inexperienced to utilize their slender stock of particular knowledge. In a world of constant political and social disturbance, the essences and categories of Aristotle and Thomas stay put. In a world where things are seldom what they seem, the practice of logical definition and deduction is a comforting routine.³⁵

Though it gives comfort to the undergraduate mind, Barzun wonders whether such a method -- "Subject, Object -- who's got the Essence" -- is the best way to teach anything from Music Appreciation to Philosophy. For example, Barzun cites from the University of Chicago Syllabus for the Introductory Course on the History and Appreciation of Music, and then remarks that nowhere is it noted that the view presented is only a view,

and not the view to have on music, that this was not Haydn's or Beethoven's view, and that perhaps there is no single view which will take in all music . . . The method cannot allow such an idea, for it is, as its favorite adjective suggests, 'fundamental,' and is glad to smother history and its concrete diversity for the sake of an absolute unity.³⁶
The reduction of the intrinsic chaos of life by means of a method, whether that of the progressives or the Neo-Aristotelians, brings us no closer to answering that initial question -- what is the best form of the preparation for life in a democracy. Holding this position, Barzun sees certain advantages, certain contributions to answering the question in both the classical and progressive doctrines. A close acquaintance with the classics, aside from the superficial advantages already noted, will provide students with a sense of

the many forms and occasions which this indomitable urgency of free mind has seized upon and turned to use. The sense of continuity, the fellowship of genius across time and space, are positive goods that give solidity to individual man and cultural tradition. 37

Two contributions of the progressives to education are identified by Barzun as well. The first is the practice of art in the curriculum. The contribution here is not only or even principally esthetic. Art

affords the surest way of teaching the rebelliousness of matter, the need for patient application, and the indefinable worth that intelligence confers on mechanical skill.

Second, the progressives have shown how important the child as individual is, and that because he is an individual mass methods do not work.

Their difficulties, motives, and powers have been studied by the progressives and often overstressed, but we are not likely to forget the lesson by which the school has been turned from a polite jail to a nursery of minds. 38
In his conclusion, Barzun once more repeats his injunction against absolute systems and the false aping of science and psychiatry, emphasizing his advocacy of what he would perhaps call practical view of education. The teacher's only practical method is to be devoted to minds and ideas. The practical curriculum is drawn from the range of culture -- past and present -- and of course included the sciences and the arts. Because of the wonderful faculty of the human mind for self-education, there is no need to teach everything by means of an over-stuffed curriculum, but to begin with a few habits --

thinking and comparison, of concentration and curiosity, the repression of intellectual fear and intellectual egotism, the desire to gauge particulars, be they books or men, in their own terms and not by rote or signs. . .

is enough. These are enough because "the rest is self-education. Once out of the teacher's hands, man and society are responsible for the culture they create in common."39

Two things are clear from this early essay in educational criticism: first is Barzun's desire to hold himself back from being the advocate of a particular party, that is, to see a thing and describe it as a partisan of the view would see it. To the partisan question: Are you for or against Progressive Education? he gives

the cultural answer: I work for individualized teaching, for the breakdown of the artificial divisions between school subjects, and so on, but against amateur psychiatry in
the classroom and against the failure to teach the three R's.

By cultural answer, Barzun means the answer which comes when the great diversity of the culture in which the question is asked is considered. In such a setting, to give assent to a system or method which denies a part of the diversity is foolish. "My interlocutor," Barzun continues,

sometimes insists: 'But are you for it (Progressive Education) as a whole, Yes or No? Don't sit on the fence!' As well ask, am I for the Atlantic Ocean? I swim in it but deplore tidal waves; and fail to see a fence in the distinction.

In this holding back from partisanship, Barzun does not refrain from taking a position. He is not letting himself open to the accusation that intellectuals dither and quibble over abstract points that have little or not practical importance. In fact, he seems to be trying to take the position of the practical man in the controversy by asking about the practical results of taking such and such a position. If one believes in treating each child as an individual, what results can be discovered in schools. Along with certain acknowledged benefits, Barzun notes the tendency toward over-concern with certain aspects of the child that preclude any actual teaching. He is the advocate of the position of the interested citizen who is concerned with finding a reasonable way to teach children and prepare them for life in a democracy.
The second point is implied in the first. Barzun's educational criticism is founded on the attempt to see the culture historically -- that is, to see an event, a movement, a set of opinions by searching for the antecedents and issues. For example, in this essay just cited and in other essays, Barzun links the educational reformers like Dewey with the tradition of educational reformers that dates back to Plato and includes Rabelais, Montaigne, and Rousseau:

The perpetual task of the educational reformer is to say: 'Look! Whatever your good intention was fifty years ago, it has now hardened into a deadly, oppressive, meaningless routine. Since you are not likely to recapture the freshness of the former effort, let me urge upon something different, a new start, with the observable child as its starting point.'

*Education and Intellect*

Just as with Barzun's historical work, his critical work is an imaginative exercise that begins in fact and is hedged around by what is probable. The difficulty of such a position is that it runs contrary to what is accepted as reliable criticism in the field of education which demands demonstration in some form or other. Hence comments on educational matters within the field tend to be validated by reference to an experiment, to some form of systematically gathered observations, or to some form of consensus -- designing curricular materials by making a systematic survey of teachers who are going to use the materials, or -- and more to the point -- criticizing teacher education curricula by
surveying recent graduates as to how they would rank the various experiences, then making decisions on such data.

Barzun's response to the demand for demonstration is that in human affairs like education there is no final demonstration. A demonstration may be used in appropriate circumstances, but ultimately, decisions about education must be made by human intelligence. No method can give the coercive answer, because any method or means of demonstration is itself a product of intelligence and thereby less than the intelligence that created it.

Barzun is a partisan of intelligence, of the assertion that ultimately man must live by his wits. This means that in education Barzun is an advocate of Intellect. By Intellect, Barzun means

the capitalized and communal form of live intelligence; it is intelligence stores up and made into habits of discipline, signs and symbols of meaning, chains of reasoning and spurs to emotion -- a shorthand and a wireless by which the mind can skip connectives, recognize ability, and communicate truth. Intellect is at once a body of common knowledge and the channels through which the right particle of it can be brought to bear quickly, without the effort of re-demonstration, on the matter in hand.

In short, Intellect is a handmaiden to intelligence, a means to supplement its weakness and a way to give form and "apt embodiment" to it.
The intelligence of a man is his own private possession, sharing his life and ceasing at his death. Intellect, on the other hand, is a public and social institution that has grown by accretion out of the efforts of individuals and groups of men. The manifestations of Intellect may be found, for example, in the conventions of language that are directed toward clear communication and the precise formulations of ideas. The order of the alphabet is such a manifestation, though at a very elementary level. Knowing the alphabet becomes a key to dealing with other products of Intellect -- as the card catalogue in a library or the order of names in the telephone book. The intellect is the set of traditions, ideas, and habits that serve to make intelligence alive and efficient. At the level of the alphabet, the traditional order makes the cataloguing of facts possible, and at the higher end, the desire and skill to set ideas down so clearly that the reader will know the writer's mind precisely are all aspects of intellect.

And Intellect is transmittable. It lives in the community and is a part of the cultural baggage. But where much of the culture is handed down in complicated ways, the Intellect is for the most part teachable -- one can be taught to spell and to use language with precision.

To emphasize the contrast between intelligence and intellect, between what is a native possession of the individual
and that which can be consciously taught and learned, and which, therefore, brings the learner into a community, Barzun uses the image of a House of Intellect.

I would speak of the realm of the mind — limitless and untamed — but I say the House of Intellect, because it is an establishment, requiring appurtenances and prescribing conventions. The distinction becomes unmistakable if one thinks of the alphabet — a product of successive acts of intelligence which, when completed, turned into one of the indispensable furnishings of the House of Intellect. To learn the alphabet calls for no great intelligence: millions learn it who could never have invented it; just as millions of intelligent people have lived and died without learning it — for example, Charlemagne.  

The distinction between intellect and intelligence is analagous to another distinction that is important for understanding Barzun's educational thought. This is the distinction between education on one hand and schooling and instruction on the other. Education is, for Barzun, what happens to a person throughout life. Like intelligence, education is a kind of realm. One part of education takes place in school under formal instruction. Unfortunately, Barzun suggests, often education is confused with schooling and instruction.

At the start of Teacher in America, Barzun cites Thomas Love Peacock's anecdote about a traveling companion who thus expatiated about Education:
The bore of all bores was the third. His subject had no beginning, middle, or end. It was education. Never was such a journey through the desert of the mind, the Great Sahara of intellect. The very recollection makes me thirsty.47

For Barzun, "Education is indeed the dullest of subjects..." because

by a strange necessity, talk about education never varies. It always seems to resolve itself into undeniable truths about 'the well-rounded man' and 'our previous heritage.' Once in a while, in a fit of daring, the man who lectures you about education points out that the phrase 'liberal arts' means 'liberating.' Then he is off on a fine canter about freedom of the mind and democracy. Or again, hypnotized by your glazed eyeballs, he slips into the old trap of proclaiming that 'education' comes from the Latin word meaning to 'lead out.' Alas! the Latin root has nothing to do with 'leading out'; it means simply -- to educate.48

The subject is dull and not worthy of extended discussion simply because, for Barzun, such discussion usually fails to distinguish between education and instruction. The one, education, is something very different from the other. Education describes

a lifelong discipline of the individual by himself, encouraged by a reasonable opportunity to lead a good life. Education here is synonymous with civilization. A civilized community is better than the jungle, but civilization is a long slow process which cannot be 'given' in a short course.49
So, while, in fact, education describes what may be the hope of the world, to speak about it as though it were the province of the school is at once to trivialize it and then to disappoint the parents and teachers who expect education in the schools.

This confusion means that men expect instruction to bring about education, when in fact the instruction that takes place in schools is quite different in quality and in kind from education. Properly conceived, one would recognize that instruction was directed at particular and achievable ends -- teaching the alphabet or the principles of wiring toasters. The usual conception, however, makes education broadly understood the goal of instruction. The humble profession of teacher is thus elevated to that of "educator" and can now take within its view something broader than mere instruction.

The high-placed theorists in teachers' colleges, the experts in departments of psychology and centers of social research, have taught that the purpose of the school is not alone to 'prepare for life' by teaching vocational or other subjects of use to the greater number, not alone to insure the child's getting along with his fellows and finding contentment in school-work, but also to achieve a 'broad' program of private and social progress toward perfection.\textsuperscript{50}

Barzun cites an article by William H. Kilpatrick on the education of teachers\textsuperscript{51} as an example of what he means.
Kilpatrick, as quoted by Barzun, addresses the education that builds character and describes how teachers help "make the student 'increasingly' helpful to his family, 'sensitive' to the rights of others, 'especially minority groups,' and equipped with an 'increasing over-all moral commitment' "

It is not that Barzun is against social progress or moral commitment. He is repelled, rather, by the confounding of education and instruction. Can a teacher bring about the development of character and the moral commitment of his students? Doubtless there is some relationship between a child's schooling and his ultimate moral commitments, but the precise nature of that relationship is not discoverable. And, even if it were possible to predict and control such relationships, Barzun would question the wisdom of doing so.

Our 'problems,' so-called, are due in part to the willfulness, stupidity, greed, and fears of men; in part also to the presence in life of real choices and hence of irreducible conflicts: Washington in 1774 was not willful, stupid, greedy, or afraid; he simply preferred independence and was 'a problem' to the British. He did not need to be cured or saved, but satisfied -- like his opponents. How could behavioral science (or the helping teacher) help -- and on which side?52

In denying the efficacy and propriety of attempting to educate through instruction, Barzun establishes the rest of analogy between intelligence-education; intellect-instruction. What is usually called education is simply instruction -- instruction being to education what intellect is to
intelligence. By calling it education -- and then linking it to the "processes of living," the institutional and artificial character of instruction is lost and soon people forget that learning requires attention and assiduity. They end by repudiating the school and entrusting to some sort of pseudo-schooling, some 'life-like' contrivance, the task of teaching.53

Put another way, Barzun's criticism of educational practice in the United States (and the Western world) is that the proper relationship between instruction and ignorance, virtue and experience has been reversed. The elimination of ignorance is the province of instruction, while one learns "about life" and the proper conduct of from one's experience. American education has chosen to link virtue (the proper conduct of life) with instruction and the elimination of ignorance with experience.54 This reversal has eliminated the notion of intellect from thought about schools. Intellect has been replaced in the schools by the union of the three enemies of intellect -- art, science, and philanthropy.

The manifestation of this union in school practice is abundantly documented by Barzun in his critical writings. Art shows itself in the cult of creativity -- that the highest good for a child is that his enthusiasm and ardor be encouraged lest his creativity be stifled.

The teacher's response to any liveliness of mind, any curiosity and imagination, has
become so respectful that it generally excludes criticism, and often omits any demand for accuracy and logic as too likely to chill ardor. 55

Philanthropy appears in the ubiquity of the word "help" in the lexicon of educators -- the notion of "helping a child has . . . displaced that of teaching him . . . " 56 Science makes its appearance in the research that is used to support the other two. The alliance results in the final inversion of purpose characteristic of the self-conscious curriculum: it assumes in each pupil the supremely gifted mind, which must not be tampered with, and the defective personality, which the school must remodel. Its incessant desire is to round off the edges, to work to moral specifications -- in short, to manipulate the young into a semblance of the harmonious committee, in accordance with the statistics of child development. This is the wickedness of the philanthropists, that they invoke the force of the group, on top of their own, to achieve something that no one has given them license to attempt. One may say that their tampering with the child's personality is saved from guilt because their goal remains vague and their effort largely unsuccessful. 57

The result of this is education without instruction and its harm is found in the waste it brings about. At the end of high school, after sixteen years of education, young people entering college are found to be open to novelty, but have no knowledge that is precise and firm, no ability to do intellectual work with thoroughness and despatch. Though here are college graduates, many of them cannot read accurately or write clearly, cannot do fractions or percentages without travail or
doubt, cannot utter their thoughts with fluency or force, can rarely show a handwriting that would pass for adult, let alone legible, cannot trust themselves to use the foreign language they have studied for eight years, and can no more range conversational ly over a modest gamut of intellectual topics than they can address their peers consecutively on one of the subjects they have studied.58

In short, the intellect is ignored; students are educated but not instructed.

The connections between Barzun's critical stance toward the state of teaching and learning in the United States and his historical thought are clear. Historical study frees one from the parochialism of his own time and place and permits him to see the exceptions and the weaknesses of the current systems and comprehensive explanations about how things are. In the case of educational practice, Barzun sees the violation of the "known limits" of schooling and teaching in current practice (c. 1959). The educationist fantasy would demand teachers form souls (a monstrous presumption) while ignoring what is possible and desirable -- the instruction that leads to accurate and fluent verbal expression, facility and ease in reading, and precise knowledge of mathematics and science, literature, history, and the arts.

The historical stance also provides Barzun with a "method" for working with the present set of affairs. Just as history, the method of criticism is "methodless" in the
sense of not having any prescribed sets of procedures which will yield exact results. Instead, the method is a metaphor for the critic's search for evidence and his careful thought about what he finds. In short, the critic makes use of "ordinary knowledge" which is defined as knowledge

that does not owe its origin, testing, degree of verification, truth status, or currency to distinctive social inquiry techniques but rather to common sense, casual empiricism, or thoughtful speculation and analysis. 59

It is obvious that central to the use of ordinary knowledge is intellect and it is here that we find Barzun's emphasis on intellect and its relation to instruction. While there are obvious limits to the power of intellect, it is Barzun's general thesis that given the nature of the human condition, the principal problem is not what to believe but what mode of thought to trust to that leads to worthy belief. 60 The mode of thought adopted by Barzun is that which he finds to be derived out of "misbehavioral science" -- that is, the science which deals with human activity or misbehavior. Misbehavior might easily be called "irregularity" as opposed to behavior or regularity that is found among other creatures and even among certain portions of human life -- the regularity of heartbeats and the chemical processes of digestion and assimilation. Because human activity is not reducible to patterns and regularity, one must deal
with it not by reference to systems which are reductive but by intelligence that is made efficient by intellect. This brings us back to the initial question posed in the chapter -- what form of education provides the best preparation for life in a democracy?

If a democracy is simply the attempt to preserve the natural freedom of the mind, then educational practice must not ignore the fact of mind by limiting -- intentionally or accidentally -- its freedom. Barzun's aim for education is not to give the pupil a system which will work, but to find a way to free the mind to work efficiently. His criticism of current practice, then, is finally based on what Barzun sees as its violation of Mind -- by denying its power in favor of methods or systems that function without Mind or intelligence. Second, mind or intelligence is violated by ignoring that part of it that can be governed by intellect and abandoning the instruction of intellect for some broad life-process "education." The violation of Mind is an aspect of the culture; the abandonment of intellect is an aspect of educational practice, which, though connected with the cultural fact, is perhaps more open to remediation. The house of intellect can be restored by restoration of teaching to its proper province. Barzun's conception of that province is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

Footnotes


7 Barzun, *Energies*, p. xii.


13 The word 'education' is used by Barzun both in its usual sense and in a more limited sense. The latter will be made clear below.


18 Barzun, Intellect, p. 88.

19 Barzun, Intellect, p. 88.

20 In his "Note to the Reader" of The House of Intellect, Barzun says: "I would ask the reader to remember that in a critical description of this work only examples of the best have any probative value. And, by the best, I mean the most developed, the most serious, the most highly regarded efforts in any relevant kind. The worst, and even the mediocre, must be taken for granted as a cultural constant." (p. vii).

21 Barzun, Intellect, p. 90.


23 Barzun, Freedom, pp. 208-236

24 Barzun, Freedom, p. 212

25 Barzun, Freedom, p. 213

26 Barzun, Freedom, pp. 213-214

27 Barzun, Freedom, p. 215

28 Barzun, Freedom, pp. 217-218

29 Barzun, Freedom, p. 219.
In a note at the end of the book Of Human Freedom, Barzun remarks about the difference between the Neo-Aristotelians and Aristotle himself: "... they are completely clear, systematic, and have answer for nearly everything, whereas the philosopher himself, as he stands revealed in his works, is a much more groping, tentative, and many-sided mind." (p. 318).


CHAPTER FOUR

Barzun: Teacher in America

Biography of a Teacher

Barzun's confrontation of the concrete realities of day to day classroom teaching demands some discussion of Barzun's life as a teacher.

Jacques was born at Creteuil near Paris, France, in 1907. The World War touched his life very deeply. The lively intellectual and artistic life of his parents' home that had existed for the young boy --

The first pictures seen: Cubist; the first music heard: Stravinsky's Sacre; the first poetry and drama: Futurist, Simultanist, 'experimental,' like the first new building visited, which was Auguste Perret's 'modernistic' skyscraper apartment, Rue Franklin -- was all destroyed by the coming of the war in August 1914. The artists were thrown into the trenches -- some never to return. The constant debilitating pressure brought an end to all the regularities of life. Sleep was interrupted by the Zeppelin raids. The prosaic regularities of school were broken by painful duties at the convalescent hospital across the schoolyard and the ceaseless wondering 'What news?' The dismal seasons followed one another until pointlessness and a detachment from life were the ruling emotions. The end of the war brought the realization 'that the self had been permanently loosened from the love of life.'

116
Wartime Paris in 1916 was like wartime England a hundred years earlier when Joseph Lancaster had attempted to make up for shortage of men by using pupil-teachers. Young Jacques became a pupil-teacher at the age of nine: "All I remember about it is that it had to do with arithmetic and that the room seemed filled with thousands of very small boys in black aprons." This apprenticeship did not last long. "Indeed, my maiden effort possibly drove me into the retirement of a protracted illness. I recovered, only to relapse, not once but many times -- into the habit of teaching." His father was sent to the United States on a diplomatic mission at the end of the Great War and Jacques joined him here in 1919. As a visitor who wished to become a citizen, Jacques was able to trade his knowledge of English for lessons in American by tutoring boys his own age. In addition, because advanced math and introductory philosophy are taught earlier abroad, Jacques was also able to tutor his peers in those subjects as well.

In 1923 he entered Columbia College as a member of the class of 1927. During his undergraduate years at Columbia College, Jacques parlayed his tutoring skill and active mind into a money-making venture. Along with a group of his classmates, he "maintained a perfectly legal and honest tutoring mill, whose gist renewed itself as we managed to put the backqard rich through the entrance examinations of famous colleges" other than Columbia."
The mill became a kind of brokerage house of academic knowledge that served to put earnest students in touch with appropriate tutors, even finding a tutor who would read *Hamlet* in Esperanto with a retired minister. As Barzun recalled,

> At times our facilities were strained and some of us found ourselves tackling subjects with a bare headstart over the pupil. But it was excellent practice and most broadening to the tutors. As a natural subsidiary enterprise we undertook high-class literary hackwork. We compiled statistics, contributed to the lesser encyclopedias, and worked up the raw materials for public addresses by public men. We referred to ourselves as Ghosts, Incorporated.  

It was during this time that Barzun made his summary of Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* for *Keller's Digest of Books*.

Two things seem important in this biographical excursion. The first is the sense in Barzun's recollections of his natural propensity for teaching; it was to be his fate to teach. It is clear that for Barzun teaching is a profession whose members cannot be produced like "so many pianoforte legs."
The second thing that emerges from Barzun's autobiographical statements about teaching is the sense of adventure that is mixed with a kind of sardonic shrug at the unadventurous parts of teaching -- the long hours, obtuse students and so forth. He begins like Richard Haliburton and then also mentions the flies and the discomforts that make the romance into truth. Unlike the clichés in the hortatory literature of
teaching, Barzun's statements are tempered by the sharply remembered drudgery and frustration:

... certainly my own vision of bliss halfway through a term is solitary confinement in a soundproof cell... It is clear that teachers are born, not made, and circumstances usually permit rather than compel. It is impossible to think of William James not teaching or of his brother Henry consenting to give a simple explanation.

The natural teacher, guesses Barzun, is distinguished from one who is not a natural teacher by the way he answers the puzzled fellow human who wants to "open a door or spell 'accommodate.' " The natural teacher can either open the door and spell 'accommodate' or he can show how the tasks may be done. While the second option is more time-consuming and difficult, it is the natural teacher's instinctive choice.

In his reflections on his earlier teaching, Barzun identifies himself with the natural teacher.

It was not with a great deal of hesitation, then, that Barzun was willing to teach an introductory course at Columbia College during the summer after his own graduation in 1927. From that Summer Session through his retirement in 1967 from Columbia Barzun taught and filled a variety of administrative posts at Columbia.

Beginning in 1934 he taught a colloquium on selected great books to upper classmen in tandem with Lionel Trilling. He helped with the creation and early teaching of the
Columbia Freshman Humanities A1-A2; B1-B2 in 1937. He
served as the Secretary to the Carman Committee and authored
A College Plan in Action in 1946, and was Dean of the Graduate
Faculties in 1955. President Arthur McMahan in that
same year had proposed a new administrative office that was
to oversee the whole of the university's academic program and
was to be called Dean of Faculties and Provost of the University. In 1958 Barzun took this post and set about the difficult task of attempting to balance the academic programs of
the sixteen schools, the various institutes, and forty departments, keeping them in proper relationship with the goals
of the university. That Barzun apparently did this job well
is extraordinary, not only because of the demands it made on
his time, but also, of course, because of the demands on his
intellect. He travelled constantly to represent Columbia at
alumni gatherings, met with numerous student groups, and re-
vised the Graduate Student Guide and Faculty Handbook. It is
even more extraordinary when it is also known that Barzun
continued to teach during these hectic years. In 1960, he
was named Seth Low Professor of History (a chair which had
been held by Carleton J. H. Hayes, one of Barzun's teachers).8

Barzun retired from the University in 1967, just before
the "bust," the Columbia Riots:

He had received the university's highest academic honor in 1967 with his appointment as university professor, at which time he sur-
rendered his administrative responsibilities.
He retained his ample office in Low Library, however, and it may have been more than coincidence that this was the only space that remained available to the central administration during the occupation of that building by students, professional radicals, and other assorted adventurers from the sidewalks of New York.

In the whole of his career at Columbia, Barzun taught many students and developed many friendships. It is perhaps instructive to hear what some of these students and friends recall about Barzun as a teacher and as a friend for the light such recollections may cast on his talk about teaching. In addition, such recollections will help make the important point that his talk about teaching, while founded on some carefully thought-out principles, is not an explication of a method or set of methods that provide a royal road to teaching success. The principles are a point of reference for Barzun. They provide guides to navigation. But the details of day to day practice are shaped by thought about the particular time and place, the students and the subject matter.

An example of the pragmatic nature of Barzun's teaching can be found in the recollection of Theodore Caplow, who is now a professor of sociology at the University of Virginia, and who was in 1937 a student of Barzun's in a course entitled "The Historical Background of English Literature." Barzun's syllabus had mandated the reading of a long list of excerpts from noted authors along with Trevelyan's History of England. But the first class meeting changed the content of
the course, recalled Professor Caplow, when Barzun introduced Byron's "She Walks in Beauty" to illustrate the relationship between a literary piece and its historical setting.

The class flung itself upon this example with avidity and, with the teacher's encouragement, found so much to consider in the piece that its eighteen lines and their historical background remained our topic for most of the term.10

Although Barzun objects to the notion that the teacher teaches all the time, "My belief is that the last thing a good teacher wants to do is to teach outside the classroom..."11 these next examples are suggestive of how the natural teacher, like Barzun, does in fact teach all the time.

Henry Graff, then a junior member of the Columbia History Department, had written a book and Barzun volunteered to criticize the galley proofs.

He was soon at work with his customary energy and wit. Along with wise and sometimes tart observations on my choice of words and my handling of ideas, he entered next to what I was representing as a quotation from Lincoln the dauntless comment: "This isn't Lincoln's music!"

Graff recalled how this stirred his mind:

I have not forgotten, nor do I expect to, how startled I was by the conception he had offered -- or the endless hours I shortly spent trying to locate the original words which I had managed to misreport. But most of all I wondered about the sources of Lincoln's 'music,' Jacques' ear for it, and the quality of the 'music' to be heard in the writings of the Presidents generally. Regarding this last aspect of the subject I
have been able to establish only that nothing significant has been written on it.12

The act of teaching reported here is considerably more subtle and complex than the research literature about teaching usually suggests. It is paradoxically more simple as well. Barzun's sense -- based on his own intimate knowledge of Lincoln's writings, led him to see that something was wrong with the quotation. But a simple question mark was not what Barzun put in the margin of the galley. His question became a suggestion about why he thought the quotation had been miswritten -- the music was not Lincoln's. And this both struck Graff and set him to thinking about the music in the writings of the Presidents. The anecdote illustrates the pedagogical theory stated numerous times (from Aristotle down) that a man's needs may be met in one of two ways. Either the need can be filled directly by a philanthropist or the man can be taught to meet his own need by the teacher.

When the Colloquium on Important Books was instituted in 1934 as a successor to Erskine's General Honors course, its existence was an affirmation of the worth of general -- as opposed to professional or specialized -- knowledge. The older course had been done in after Erskine left Columbia in the name of true scholarship. "How could one," asked the critics of the course, "know Dante or even begin the study of his work without knowing Italian?" But Barzun and his
"confederates" were able to reinstate a course that affirmed the view held by Erskine,

that an educated man, such as a college graduate was supposed to be, must know the great works of the art and thought of his cultural tradition, and that he had best begin his acquaintance with them as if they had been created to be the object not of his solemn study but of his lively interest.¹³

The Colloquium was held each week of the academic year on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 — a canonical hour sanctified by Erskine's own General Honors course. Another of the features of the original class was repeated in the new, that the small sections would be taught by two instructors each from a different intellectual discipline. Barzun, the young professor of History, invited Lionel Trilling, the English instructor, to join him in teaching one of the sections. It is from this set of circumstances that this example of Barzun's teaching is drawn.

On Trilling's desk when he died in November of 1975, was the uncompleted manuscript of a personal memoir of his relationship with Barzun. Trilling's memoir recalls the growth of the friendship between the two, and notes that while the closeness that characterized the friendship seemed to come about effortlessly, he and Jacques "came together over a considerable distance."

Although both had been undergraduates at Columbia about the same time (Trilling graduated in 1925 and Barzun in 1927),
they had not been close and their respective undergraduate careers seemed to emphasize their differences. Trilling had made several half-hearted attempts to become a part of the student activities of Columbia -- he had "gone out for" the Varsity and the Spectator, the college literary magazine and the college newspaper, but his interest in them was short-lived. He tried to join the Philolexian Society and was rejected. He played a "censorious middle-aged secretary" in the Sophomore Show, but by the end of the first performance he realized that such student activities were not for him. His extra-curricular life from then on, it seemed to him, was as a young man tinctured with "Dostoievski and Chekhov."

Jacques' relationship to the undergraduate establishment was the exact opposite of mine. Where I began in passivity and deference and ended in contempt, he took the measure of every organization which might bear on his interests and estimated what pleasure it might give him through making demands upon his energies and abilities. By the time he graduated he was the dramatic critic of Spectator, editor of Varsity, president of Philolexian, and author of the 1927 "Varsity Show."

Trilling found it important to remember that such undergraduate histories might imply a difference in temperament that might make a difference. That it, in fact, made no difference was shown by Barzun's invitation to Trilling to instruct the section of the Colloquium on Important Books.

There is something revealing about Barzun in Trilling's description of how Barzun had selected a harness-mate, a co-instructor, of a class by reaching across what might seem an
immense distance marked by personality and personal taste. What Barzun seemed to be doing was to look for another good mind with which he could work in tandem. That Barzun's sense was right is confirmed by Trilling's subsequent biography as teacher and critic, and as thinker well-respected by intellectuals distinctly nonliterary in their sensibility. In the community of social scientists and historians, Trilling was not just awarded praise, but was seen as a writer unique in his understanding of society. He had absorbed society's truth: that it is a dense fabric of desire and limitation. Its existence, moreover, is genuine. It is not the product of ephemeral imagination, but of the history of conflict, error, and will. Such a choice speaks well of Barzun's perspicacity, but it also speaks to his genuine belief in the intellect, in acting not like a partisan but as an artisan in the House of Intellect.

In seeking to understand Barzun as a teacher of the course, two of Trilling's observations seem apposite. First, the course was taught in such a way that it was hoped that the members of the small class would come to a "better comprehension of certain books" as well as becoming somewhat more adept in talking about these books.

We pursued no ideological program, in the sense of seeking to attach our students to some particular set of ideas, or at least we were not conscious of such a purpose; although generally our class session went in a lively controversial way, I don't recall that we generated any dialectical drama or had it in mind to do so.
The course was lively, as is suggested by Trilling's observation that "nothing so bound Jacques and me as our love of punning . . . " and the recollection of at least one example:

One of the punning episodes of our Colloquium seems to have established itself in legend and Jacques and I are sometimes asked whether, in the course of discussion of An Essay on the Principle of Population, I said of some opinion of the work that had been advanced, 'Honi soit qui Malthus pense,' and that Jacques replied, 'Honi soit qui mal thus puns.' Although I do not recall the incident, internal evidence seems to indicate that it took place as recorded.¹

The second observation concerns the spirit which pervaded the course. The content of the course was, as the title indicated, important books. Beginning with, for example, Tom Jones and following with a similarly important book for each of the 28 weeks of the academic year, the course would provide an introduction to part of the cultural heritage of the western world. Understandably, perhaps, such a regimen would arouse a variety of emotions and thoughts in the students -- some books would be approved and others would be disapproved. Julien Sorel, the hero of Stendhal's The Red and the Black, was consistently assaulted by the students in the course over the years and was just as consistently assigned and defended by Jacques and Trilling, both of whom adored Julien.¹⁸ The happy defense of certain unpopular books was accompanied by another kind of defense. It is Barzun's contention that modern art since the Great War has
confirmed and expressed "the idea of the pointlessness of existence." The Colloquium in its spirit was thus hostile to modern art. Trilling recalls,

The books we read were massed against it -- they were nothing if not affirmative. To begin at, say, 1750 with Tom Jones and to read some twenty-eight 'great' books of the next two hundred years was to encounter a great many works that committed themselves to hope, to the joy of discovery and renovation. To be sure, there was in the offering always the possibility of pointlessness and the disgust it aroused, but almost always, as in Hobbes and Swift, in Schopenhauer, Balzac, Stendhal, Dickens, Nietzsche, it was to be named forthrightly, identified as the enemy and confronted with a heroic energy of resistance. 19

The heroism in the defense of hope, discovery and renovation during the actual classes was matched by the heroism of the preparation for those classes since the books that were read were read by everyone -- the instructors included. The books were not taught, but were discussed; not, one gathers, to allow all to have a voice, but to increase understanding and the fluency with which one proposes and defends a position. The preparation for such a course, therefore, demanded a fresh reading by the instructors.

The course seemed to be designed as if its chief purpose was to give life such significance as derives from achievement against odds. It consisted of a series of dramatic structures, each of which came to its climax on Wednesday evening. Thursday might conceivably accommodate gestures toward relaxation and well-deserved rest, but by Friday one had to be getting forward with next week's book, possibly with the illusion which might be maintained for the first day
of the weekend, that one could get the work done at a reasonable, deliberate pace. But this was never possible — unfailingly one had to read faster and give more hours to reading as each day passed. Wednesday afternoon was given to desperate efforts to come to the end of the work, and then a call to reasonableness and the jotting down of salient ideas. A shower before dinner was fortifying...

One final observation may be made about Barzun's teaching as it has been seen by his students and colleagues. Reading Barzun abstractly, one is given the impression that here is an immensely difficult person — highly opinionated and prickly — for a student to deal with. Kenneth B. Clark, the psychologist, recalled that as a student he thought that Barzun was "part of that . . . foreboding shadow of standards . . ." that he and every other student at Columbia must reckon with in order to successfully gain his degree. The disembodied Barzun of the writings, read hastily or with little appreciation for their spirit, apparently was different from the Barzun with whom students at Columbia actually came in touch. Clark discovered that Barzun's physical demeanor was consistent with the appearance he makes in his writings.

He looked like his name. He personified prestige, authority and self-confidence. The severity of his standards and his unapologetic insistence upon excellence in academic pursuits dominate all aspects of his person.

But when Barzun sent Clark his book, Race: A Study in Modern Superstition, Clark's reading of it brought him to another
level of understanding of Barzun both as a man and as a teacher.

Although in candor, which he would respect, I could not state that Jacques Barzun's book on race is one of the classics which have been written on this problem, what his book did for me was to help me understand a number of other things about Jacques Barzun, the person. Here was a man so concerned with the positive potentials of human beings that he had no patience with the variety of excuses which interfered with the stimulation and development of these potentials. Jacques Barzun seemed to respond to the nature and quality of the ideas of others rather than to superficial irrelevancies.

Clark goes on to describe how Barzun reminded him of the best of his teachers in elementary and high school because, like Barzun, they held Clark to exactly the same standards they held for themselves. There was never condescension in their manner.

If one believes that an individual with high standards of excellence who respects solid creativity and thought is an elitist, then Jacques Barzun and some of my best teachers are elitists. From my perspective, they are democratic elitists. They did not contaminate their elitism with the idiocy that intelligence, creativity and sensitivity are in any way determined by the color of one's skin or one's economic status. They related to their fellow human beings on the basis of the fact that excellence can come in the package of a white or black skin; that whites or blacks can be mediocre and -- the ultimate test of liberation from the subtle forms of American racial condescension -- that there can be white and black idiots.22

Clark's contention about Jacques' faith in the potential of humans may be tested by looking at his relations with
those who differ with him on questions of moment. A genuine belief in human potential would seem to imply that the potential produces diversity of opinion and thought about important questions and that, therefore, beliefs in potential should accompany a species of tolerance for ideas and opinions that are markedly or subtly different from one's own ideas and opinions. For Barzun, the desire to have all men hold the same or similar positions is like the desire of Procrustes, who in the myth captured travellers and measured them on his bed. If the victim was too short, Procrustes cut him down to size. In short, Procrustes, observes Barzun, was the "Arch Neurotic, baffled by the unsatisfactory proportions of his victims." In his own dealings with the diversity resulting from the unpredictability of human potential to grow in all sorts of ways, Barzun demonstrates a view of the world that is the opposite of Procrustes'.

For example, Theodore Caplow, cited above (p. 121), writes that

I was a student of Jacques Barzun's at Columbia College in 1937 and have remained in touch with him ever since. Over the years, we have kept up a running conversation, in which the thread has been Jacques' devastating critique of empirical sociology and my defense of it. His position in this debate was initially strong, but has been undermined by his passionate interest in sociological topics and his own talents as a sociological observer.  

Another example may be drawn from a description of Barzun's relation with Carolyn G. Heilbrun, a professor of English at
Columbia and also a writer both of scholarly works and of detective fiction under the name of Amanda Cross. She was Barzun's student at Columbia in 1953.

Since she became his colleague, they have exchanged theories on detective fiction, certain nineteenth century English writers, biography, and the ideal seminar and lecture course. His discovery, just prior to the publication of *A Catalogue of Crime*, that she was Amanda Cross inspired him to offer her plots, none of which she felt she was talented enough to use.

This playful description of Barzun's relations with his colleague takes on a somewhat more serious tone when it was observed that although Barzun does not feel sympathetic inclinations toward the subject of Heilbrun's publication, *Towards a Recognition of Androgyny*, it "received his support, as its author had always enjoyed his encouragement." 25

We may now turn to Barzun's writings about teaching, knowing certain facts about the background of their author.

First, Barzun is an experienced and successful teacher.

Second, he has been involved not only in teaching but in development of courses of an innovative nature.

Third, his teaching is apparently marked by belief in human potential, to be encouraged by the demand for excellence -- even when it appears that such growth may be counter to Barzun's own inclinations.

Fourth, Barzun is a democratic elitist. This means that he believes that it is better to know than not to know, and,
consequently, that one who knows is in a sense superior to the ignorant. But the power to know is not limited by birth or economic state. Potential for excellence may be found in any child. The teacher's way of proceeding with the task is important if such potential is to be realized.

**Barzun's Pedagogy**

It has already been shown that at the very heart of Barzun's criticism of pedagogical practice in America is the confusion between education and instruction. The confusion, "the deepest rooted error of American education . . . "26 complicates the teacher's task and deflects the teacher from what he can actually do. Barzun's aim in his 'talk about teaching' is to disentangle education and instruction and show what the latter consists of, how it proceeds and what its aim is.

His description of teaching is deliberately simple. Teaching has been carried on as long as there have been human beings; it is no new invention of our time:

Think of the human pair teaching their child how to walk. There is, on the child's side, strong desire and latent powers: he has legs and means to use them. He walks and smiles; he totters and looks alarmed; he falls and cries. The parents smile throughout, showering advice, warning, encouragement, and praise. The whole story, not only of teaching, but of man and civilization, is wrapped up in this first academic performance. It is funny because clumsiness makes us laugh, and touching because undaunted effort strikes a chord of gallantry, and
finally comic because it has all been done before and is forever to do again. 27

The image here of the child learning to walk serves to make clear the nature and the aim of all instruction. The child is doing most of the work; learning is the child's task. The teacher stands at one side "showering advice, warning, encouragement, and praise." The teacher's aim is for the child to walk; where the walking will take the child is unknown. The teacher's procedure is to recognize the child's "desire and latent power: he has legs and means to use them."

The image also suggests at once the nobility of what the teacher is assisting the child to do and the limitations placed on the teacher. The child is learning to walk on his own; the teacher's assistance is limited by the desire and latent power of the child. The fact that the child possesses both latent powers and the desire to use them serves to define the nature of the teacher's "intervention" in the child's life.

The child has both power and the desire to use it and his whole life will provide experience. What the child lacks is knowledge; he is ignorant about his world. The teacher's obvious task is, therefore, to help the child abolish his ignorance. The ignorance that is to be abolished is narrowly limited. Certainly, for example, the child is ignorant of
life, but Barzun does not see the teacher as teaching the
cchild about life. If learning and living are one, and that
learning is best done through living, what is there for a
teacher to do? Education is a process as large as life;
learning is as inescapable as breathing.

Very true, but in the sense in which it is
true there is no more to be said, it will
happen; we can go home. Meanwhile what the
student picks up from such truisms is a
mixed attitude that is unfortunate. Having
all of life to 'educate' in, he can in-
dulge himself a bit; and he misses the spur
of difficulty. There is nothing in front
of him to do that must be done . . . Educa-
tion is 'to gain new insights into the
self and the lives of others.' Education
'develops aesthetic experience and capabil-
ities'; and of course helps acquire a 'set
of values,' which sounds like a box of 28
chessmen to play the game of life with.

To teach a child "about life" demands that a previous
question be asked, "Which life?" Since this question is un-
answerable if one wishes to prepare students for life in a
democracy, which is by definition, pluralistic, the teacher
turns his attention to the pupil's basic ignorance. The pu-
pil does not know what he is capable of. Teaching a child
about life is to direct the child to a particular goal. Car-
rried to its logical conclusion as in Brave New World, an edu-
cator teaches Beta child about Beta life. Barzun, the demo-
crat, says that if you believe in allowing the maximum de-
gree of choice in the lives of the citizens of democracy, you
teach not life, but those teachable things which will enable
the student to direct himself — to read and write, to know about the human adventure, and so forth.

Barzun has picked up the thread of thought about teaching and learning that extends back at least as far as Aristotle and which holds that a child grows into a human being through the development of his human powers and the chief of these is the power to learn. Some subjects, in this view, are valuable because they are the 'subjects of learning' -- that is, that learning them changes the learner by stretching or exercising the power of learning. Learning to read not only gives one a new ability, but, as research indicates, it changes the very ways in which one approaches experience. To learn history or chemistry or mathematics forces the pupil to think in ways that are unfamiliar. Working carefully and diligently at such subject matter makes the learner over, into a different being. Having discovered unseen ions in a solution, a student can never be the same as he was before, even when he has forgotten the precise details of qualitative analysis. Having studied the Peloponnesian War in Thucydides, the student gains a broader understanding of politics.

The pupil's ignorance about his own capability is abolished by teaching "the subjects of learning." It is clear from Barzun's description of them that they serve to abolish ignorance in two ways. First, each subject in the examples, history, chemistry, languages, describes a part of the human
adventure. Learning these subjects thus abolishes a part of the child's ignorance about his humanity. Second, each of these subjects is the manifestation of the basic human powers being nurtured and exercised in order to find clear ideas about the human world. By learning to exercise his own powers in these fundamental ways, the child's latent power becomes a power at hand. The pupil learns the facts of the subjects and the principles that show how the facts and ideas fit together.

If the aim of teaching is to abolish ignorance by instructing pupils about human intelligent activity and by exercising the pupils' powers to learn, then the question remains as to what constitutes the curriculum and the method of instruction.

The nature of the curriculum has already been implied. Like the aim of education, the curriculum in Barzun's conception is simple. Since one aim of the curriculum is to organize the human adventure for study, Barzun asks, what are the great divisions of that adventure? The divisions are the natural and social sciences, the humanities (history, literature, and the like) and the arts, both plastic and performed.\(^2\) The test for the inclusion of a subject in the curriculum is to ask whether it fits the requirements of the mind to learn it. For example, a man may grow tolerant or become a tolerant person, but it is perhaps impossible to
to teach tolerance because it is a virtue and not a subject. It is possible to study examples of toleration, but then you are teaching history or philosophy.

You could not hope to make a genuine course of study by stringing together two dozen instances of struggle for toleration. At the third instance you would lose your class. Why? Because in a real subject there must be order, progression, increasing complexity, new principles at every step. This in turn is true because the human mind is built on dramatic lines. It wants plot, climax, and denouement. Without them attention wanders and teaching dies. Can you imagine a play composed of nine opening scenes? Each might be most alluring but no audience could stand the strain of bafflement or have zest for ever-new beginnings.33

Instruction proceeds in a manner implied by the nature of the subject matter and the aim of instruction. The teacher's principal aim is to change the subject matter into an object of study. The pupil sees the French Revolution or imagines the pressure on a column of mercury.34 He, therefore, begins with what the learner can do and what he already knows and he begins with the matter that has posed the question -- what is this? how is it done? Upon the foundation of what the learner knows and can do, the teacher-artist builds by the familiar process of taking apart and putting together. He must break down the new and puzzling situation into simpler bits and lead the learner in the right order from one bit to the next. What the simpler bits and the right order are no one can know ahead of time. They vary for each individual and the teacher must grope around until he
finds a 'first-step' that the particular pupil can manage.35

Barzun sees the teacher and the learner as two separate persons, two minds, backgrounds, and so forth, who approach the classroom with divergent motives. The pupil comes with curiosity; he wants to know what grown-ups know. The teacher is curious too . . .

but it is chiefly about the way the pupil's mind -- or hand -- works. Remembering his own efforts and the pleasure of discovery, the master finds a satisfaction which I have called artistic in seeing how a new human being will meet and make his own some part of our culture . . . 36

Barzun's teacher has knowledge of some aspect of the present culture which he can teach a new member of the culture, and to that extent is a conserver of the present state of affairs. But he recognizes that he is presenting this knowledge to a new mind that will make over the knowledge to a greater or lesser extent, and will make new knowledge. The new knowledge is the result of the development of the powers of the pupil and this development comes out of the pupil's resistance to what he is to learn, to the teacher's demand that he continually stretch himself.

'Here I am, he thinks, 'with my brains nicely organized -- with everything, if not in its place, at least in a place where I can find it -- and you come along with a new and strange item that you want to force into my previous arrangement. Naturally, I resist. You persist. I begin to dislike you. But at the same time you show me aspects of this
new fact or idea which in spite of myself mesh in with my existing desires. You seem to know the contents of my mind. You show me the proper place for your contribution to my stock of knowledge. Finally, there is brooding over us a vague threat of disgrace for me if I do not accept your offering and keep it and show you that I still have it when you — dreadful thought! — examine me. So I give in, I shut my eyes and swallow. I write little notes about it to myself, and with luck the burr sticks: I have learned something. Thanks to you? Well, not exactly. Thanks to you and thanks to me. I shall always be grateful for your efforts, but do not expect me to love you, at least not for a long, long time. When I am fully formed and somewhat battered by the world and yet not too displeased with myself, I see that I owe it all to you. It will be an exaggeration on the other side, just as my present dislike is an injustice. Strike an average between the two and that will be a fair measure of my debt.

The teacher is thus less like a doctor treating a patient than he is like a diplomat to a sovereign nation who makes use of the divisions in the national mind. He allies himself with the curious radical minority against the conservative majority.

The conservative part of the pupil's mind is passive, stubborn, mute; but his radical minority, that is, his curiosity and his desire to grow up, may be roused to action. The move forward is generally short; then the conservatives return to power; they preserve, they feel pride of ownership in the new acquisition and begin to think they had it as a birthright.

Two further principles must be kept in mind by the teacher. First, he is attempting to free the pupil from the need
to be taught and every chance for this to happen must be taken. Barzun recounts how, when he was young he was taught the multiplication tables by rote.

It never occurred to the teacher to show us how the answers could be arrived at also by addition, which we already knew. No one said, 'Look: if four times four is sixteen, you ought to be able to figure out, without the aid of memory, what five times four is, because that amounts to four more one's added to the sixteen.' This would at first have been puzzling, more complicated and difficult than memory work, but once explained and grasped, it would have been an instrument for learning and checking the whole business of multiplication. We could temporarily have dispensed with the teacher and cut loose from the printed table.

Second, because most teaching is verbal, the teacher must avoid the temptation to cover emptiness with Hokum, that is, empty verbal packages. The words that the teacher uses should "point to things seen or unseen." Barzun recalled giving a short quiz to a class of young women who were studying the Renaissance. He had asked for an identification of Petrarch.

One girl, who had evidently read a textbook, wrote down: 'Petrarch -- the vanguard of the new emphasis.' I spent a good hour trying to explain why this parroting of opinion was not only not 'correct' but blind hokum. . . . The child's instinct is first to believe the Word, spoken or printed: then with growing good sense to disbelieve it, but to trust to its hokum value for getting through by 'satisfying' the teacher. Great heavens, what satisfactions!
To carry my anecdote one step further, I believe I made a lifelong friend and a convert to decent learning by persuading my student that almost any honest mistake would have been truer than the absurdity she was palming off. She might better have been trivial: 'Petrarch was an Italian'; or flippant: 'Wrote poems to a girl named Lara'; or downright mistaken: 'Also spelled Plutarch,' rather than do what she did. My difficulty, and this is the point -- was in convincing her that I meant what I said, in breaking down the strongest superstition of the young, which is that everybody but themselves prefers make-believe and lives by it.41

It is clear from this description of Barzun's pedagogy that his aim is not education, but rather education through instruction. The center of his pedagogy is the pupil in the midst of life, experiencing and learning. The teacher attempts to touch one part of the pupil's life by bringing the latent powers into usefulness. By giving the pupil instruction in the subjects of learning, Barzun's hope is to transform his experience not by the application of book knowledge to the problems of the world -- an application that is already common in government and industry and finance.

What is still needed, as it was when Chapman wrote, is the worldly knowledge of books, that ready application of intellect to society and of experience to written thought, which Chapman shows in all his studies: the market place re-entering the word and being transfigured by it.42

The reading of books is, for Barzun, a necessity.

not for relaxation (neurotic ideal!), not for cultivation of the genteel virtues, and even less for the acquiring of 'valuable
information,' but for the extension of the sense of life, and especially the sense of the scale of life. 43

Reading of the experiences of others -- real or imagined, historical, scientific, aesthetic, philosophic -- becomes a way for the reader to add to his own set of experiences. Thus reading is more than technical proficiency, more than simple literacy and the ability to 'decode' "WARNING ELECTRIC SHOCK!" It suggests that reading (as a basic) touches all that is most human -- it should be an intellectual and emotional experience that is quite beyond 'bookishness.'

It is also clear that Barzun's pedagogy is humanistic in its sense that the mysteries of human beings are open to understanding by the human mind -- that no particular techniques or methods are superior to that mind. It is also humanist in its optimism about human potential. There is no need to show man where he must go or what he must do. This is the humanism of Areopagitica, in which Milton affirmed that true virtue lay not in avoiding evil:

I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd virtue, unexercis'd and unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortall garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.

Instruction fits one to run that race, education comes in the running.
Barzun as Teacher: A Book and a Course

It is always difficult to get a sense of what a teacher is about, either from his written comments on teaching or from students who have been taught by him. Although the case with Barzun is somewhat different because he is well able to speak for himself, it would still be an advantage to take a course from him. A book that is in a very practical sense a teaching book is Barzun's *Simple & Direct: A Rhetoric for Writers* which, although he declares it a book of "hints and guidelines," is in fact a pedagogical work — just as its subtitle suggests — a rhetoric for writers.

The claim that Barzun makes for this work — the purpose to which it is directed — is simple and direct. Barzun has never taught a course in composition, but in his years of teaching, he has

almost continually been engaged in editing the work of students, colleagues, and friends. In dealing with students, graduate and undergraduate, I have had the special obligation of finding ways to arouse their dormant attention to words, so that they could in the end edit themselves.

The task of self-editing is the task of becoming self-critical, which in turn demands self-consciousness and analysis. Thus the book is about writing, but is radical in its approach in that the root difficulties of writing are the difficulties of self-expression. The emphasis is both on the expression and on what the expresser thinks about it — its
appropriateness, its precision, its fit with the expresser's thought. The double emphasis is important because, while there are no fixed rules to separate good expression from bad, it is also true that some ways of expression are clearly better than others. Instead of teaching the proper rules of writing, Barzun wants to introduce the reader-pupil to the "art of becoming self-conscious and analytic about words." 46

How that is done is hinted at in the advice which Barzun gives about the use of the book itself:

The reader who comes to make a fuss, that is, discover what he or she thinks and feels about this or that phrasing, will benefit most. But no one should try to take all these suggestions and arguments in one long swallow, or suffocation may ensue. There is a great deal to know about writing one's own tongue ... it cannot be learned in six easy lessons. Read one section at a time, ponder the examples, (either on paper or mentally), go back to an earlier passage when a subject comes up again in a new context -- in short, use the book like a person to listen to and argue with. 47

The author writes the book as if he took his own advice. He is talking to you, the reader, and he is arguing with you. He is also following the description of what a teacher does -- that is, take the subject matter and make it the object of study, picking it up, turning it around and examining it before the eyes of the pupil. Clearly, he wants the mind of the reader, for a moment at least, to share his thought.

He does this by a series of virtuoso lectures. The first section, "DICTION, or Which Words to Use," provides
an excellent example. He talks to the reader about words and the knowledge and thought that is necessary to have and exercise when attempting to choose the *mot juste*. It is apparent that Barzun follows his own counsel -- he is knowledgeable and he is thoughtful. In short, reading this book provides the reader-pupil with an example of a man working through the difficulties of choosing the words to use:

Now, the simple words in the language tend to be the short ones that we assume all speakers know; and if familiar, they are likely to be direct. I say 'tend to be' and 'likely' because there are exceptions. For example, *börst*, meaning industrial diamond, is short and direct, but it is not simple in the sense of readily understood. *Emergency* is a long word; it is simple in that same sense of being understood; in that same sense of being familiar; but being also abstract, it is not direct like the concrete words for which it stands: fire, accident, or hemorrhage. (Query: Should the last word be replaced by *bleeding* to death? It is impossible to tell without knowing the context and the audience.) Our tentative conclusion, then, is:

> Prefer the short word to the long; the concrete to the abstract; and the familiar to the unfamiliar. But:  .  .  . 48

Each of the expositions is thus a kind of lecture whose goal is to stimulate the reader-upil's sensitivity to the precise meanings of words. Because the possible number of words that might be used in any particular context is very large, Barzun cannot teach fifty important words or a hundred or a thousand. The strategy is to point out to the reader-pupil that words do have meanings which distinguish one from
another -- struck and stricken, wooden and wooded, below and beneath, aft and after -- and making these distinctions needs to become a conscious activity of the writer if he is to reach the goal of being simple and direct.

At appropriate places during the exposition, Barzun gives the reader-pupil exercises to work at. These follow development of the principles ("Principle 8: For a plain style, avoid everything that can be called roundabout -- in idea, in linking, or in expression")49 and give the reader-pupil the chance to test his wits by using the principle. Fittingly, there is no answer page at the back of the book for the reader to check his selections.

The book perhaps suggests Barzun as teacher. He begins with knowledge of some subject matter that he turns into an object of study halfway between him and his reader-pupils. He harangues, cajoles, and demonstrates to the reader-pupil to stimulate, admonish and teach him. The stimulating, admonishing, and teaching are aimed at making the reader-pupil into a student of his own and other's language. "All Good Writing is Self-Taught," but it is helpful to have a teacher who knows some things that you don't know and who can, therefore, serve as a guide, stimulator, and corrector.
A Course: Humanities Al-A2; Bl-B2

In 1966, Daniel Bell praised the Columbia Humanities A course as

one of the great courses in American education. For the past quarter of a century and more, it has been the keystone course of Columbia College. A recent survey of student reaction showed that it still had the power to provoke interest and excite the imagination. . . 50

This course and Barzun's connection with it provide another insight into the practical nature of Barzun's teaching. What is the nature of formal courses that he defends? Humanities A provides a case in point.

The course itself, as was remarked, is the intellectual child of the general education movement and may be linked to John Erskine's General Honors course being given at Columbia as early as 1919. In 1934, the course was revived as "The Colloquium on Important Books" by Barzun and his confederates. As with the Erskine course, this was taught to selected junior and senior students only. In 1934, Columbia began to attempt to find the answer to the question posed by Erskine, Nock, President Lowell of Harvard, Meiklejohn, and Flexner. The question rose out of the observation that while the American college often gave training of one kind or another, it seldom educated in any real sense . . . very often the training itself was superficial or illusory, that it could be entirely side-stepped by the adroit or the indifferent, who thus wasted four years of their lives
piling up disconnected credits or pursuing incoherent majors toward a meaningless A.B. If the word education meant anything it was high time to find out what it meant and to see to it that the college took steps to provide it. 49

For Barzun, not yet so displeased with the word 'education,' the answer to the first part of the question was not as difficult as that to the second: "an educated man or woman is one who has an inner life worth living, whose actual experience has been extended by the vicarious experience of books and the fine arts, and whose perspective upon men and things has been enlarged by a reflective view of the historical past . . ." 52 Its acquisition is personal, because its practicality is personal, for its aim is the difficult achievement of getting on with oneself. It may appear that this definition of education is inconsistent with Barzun's later damning of the word; 53 the actual construction of the course shows that while the words are different, the spirit is consistent with Barzun's ideals about instruction.

Beginning in 1934 with a committee composed of faculty from a number of different departments of the college, the attempt was made to answer the second and more difficult question: what can a college do to provide an education? Recognizing the depth versus the breadth problem in designing a general education program, the committee sought to design not a survey -- a "high-speed Cook's Tour," but an introductory
course like those in the social and physical sciences. Of course the difficulty here resided in the difference between the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Literature and art have to be gotten directly, a textbook account does not serve the purposes of what it is summarizing.

As Barzun recounts it, the committee worked for a year discussing the problems of such a course, and arrived at four conclusions about its nature: 1) it should be compulsory for Freshmen and Sophomores, being taken during both those years four times a week in the Freshman year and three times during the Sophomore; 2) the scope of the readings should include those works from the Greeks through the nineteenth century; 3) the readings should be whole books or at least large self-contained chunks; 4) the course should be conducted in small discussion groups of twenty to twenty-five students, and that the students should remain with the same instructor for the full year. Other committees were formed to complete the initial work, and in the spring of 1937, Columbia College gave approval to the required Freshman course, Humanities A1-A2; B1-B2. The final form of the course embodied an important alteration from the original plan -- the second year would be devoted to art and music exclusively, and could be waived by students who would be working in those areas. For Barzun, Columbia's contribution to the initial question was, therefore, primarily in the Freshman Humanities course in literature and philosophy.
In many ways, as it is described, Humanities falls short of being a 'course' in either literature or philosophy. If a course of study uses the materials -- readings as a way to lay out the principles of the discipline -- whether literature or philosophy -- Humanities A was not a course but a set of readings. Beginning with Aristotle's Ethics and reading through Tom Jones at the rate of one book a week does not allow for study in the scholarly sense. But that was not the goal of the course. The students were meeting the various books, not as a means to some scholarly or professional end -- the study of Italian idioms in Dante or learning the basic literature of Greek philosophy --, but as a way to meet the books simply on their own terms. An author wrote a book to talk 'man to man,' as it were, to the reader. It was the object of the course to give the freshmen a chance to read a series of representative books -- representative of the humanistic, humane, human thought of our culture -- not to find idioms or as preparation for scholarly work, but to look at what the various authors were talking about.55

To be sure -- and this is important -- the course was not simply a series of conversations loosely based on hasty reading of the books. Barzun saw in a 'detail of procedure' the way that solid work could be done in a course like Humanities. The detail was based on the assumption that there would be a residue of fact which would remain after reading
one of the books -- that a symposium was a drinking party, that Limbo is a place, that the title of Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* is a quotation, and that in spite of popular belief Mephisto and Machiavelli do not stand for the same things.56

It was also assumed that an educated man would have some of these facts at his beck and call, but gained in their proper milieu and not out of a handbook of culture.57 So, each week, all of the members of the class were given the same objective type examination on the reading for the week. The grades were determined by a normal distribution curve. Such quizzes tested the reading by testing the residue of fact that remained after such reading. The discussions, then, suggested Barzun,

reinforced, modified, and related the facts, the aim being to fuse information into knowledge. This knowledge was admittedly superficial with respect to each book, but it was real; it did not consist in memorized opinions about somebody's style nor in synopses of philosophical systems. It relied on concrete sense of knowing which makes us infallibly recognize our friend in a crowd of strangers even though we may be hard put to it to state in words how we know.58

In addition to the quizzes and the discussions, each student was tested four times each year by means of "fairly elaborate essay examinations."

The difficulties of such a course are readily apparent. A faculty of energy and intelligence needs to be chosen, pupils who were in high school one summer ago had to discover the purposes of the course and learn to do the work -- that
is, the reading - - efficiently. Finally, there was the need to solve the logistics of finding a large number of books so that each student could conveniently get his hands on the book of the week. The faculty was drawn from the departments of English, history, philosophy, Classics, the Romance and Germanic languages. The fact that each faculty member was a specialist in one of these subjects caused some discomfort for the faculty members themselves. The philosophy professor, notes Barzun, was given the task of leading a discussion about Molière, while the French professor needed to do the same with Spinoza. But the conception of the course lessened the difficulty.

If freshmen were asked to read, and could presumably understand, both Molière and Spinoza - - at least given the limits of the course - - then it should follow that a Ph.D. in French or philosophy does not disqualify its holder from understanding either. Although the members of the teaching faculty had read more widely and deeply than the students in history, English, or German, the problems of the course were located within the covers of the various books that were to be read -- and the problems were thus as accessible to the teachers as to the students, because each book was confronted, not as ancillary to a larger purpose of education, but as a statement of "individual and social problems that still occupy us." The teacher is no longer a professional
his teaching future historians, but a human being trained in an intellectual tradition and widely read; the student is also a human being who is neither widely read not well-trained in an intellectual tradition.

The students failed at the rate of 2.1 per cent of the whole class that first year. Students whose reading ability caused them difficulty were referred to remedial reading courses. In addition, the difficulty of a Freshman year that contained as demanding a course as Humanities (and two other introductory courses in the social and physical sciences) had to be bridged by making the aims of the course clear.

The instructors were soon called upon for advice by the students, and sometimes assailed by colleagues in other courses, where certain bewildered students were neglecting their work for the sake of passing the weekly Humanities quiz. The purpose of the quiz had to be explained, or, rather, the Freshmen had to be convinced that the explanation was true; the relation it implied between facts and knowledge had to be illustrated, and the mechanics of efficient reading had to be expounded.61

The logistics of the large number of books needed was solved by the co-operation of the Columbia University bookstore that "agreed to sell (or rent) the required set without handling charge and with the option of small weekly payments."62 The books themselves were chosen from the various inexpensive editions of the classics.
The description of the course from Barzun's point of view seems to give evidence that his conception of teaching is complex in that it includes not only what is vulgarly termed 'theoretical' components but also the practical considerations that are needed in order to bring about, or make real, such a course. In discussions of teaching, the dichotomy is usually made between theory and practice. Some educators think, while others do. Clearly Barzun finds such a bifurcation unsatisfactory. He agrees with Whitehead's assertion that "a merely well-informed man is the most useless creature on this earth" and sees the proper aim of education in the United States as the preparation of the rare individual,

the man of ideas, with a mind accustomed not merely to holding facts in solution but to crystallizing them for use. And the making of such men in sufficient numbers and varieties ought to be the great end of all our teaching.

This somewhat unusual definition of 'the man of ideas' reflects an older conception of the ideal of man thinking as the man fittest to take part in a life of action.

Conventional wisdom suggests that knowledge arises out of facts. The wisdom held by Barzun claims that in all important activities the reverse is true -- facts grow out of knowledge, at least in several important ways. In a world in which an article about the field of weak interaction physics can begin "One of the most remarkable facts . . .
is the non-observation of bosonic leptons," such a statement does not seem far-fetched. For Barzun, the evidence of man's record on the earth as a thinking being points to the variety and unpredictability that is found in that record. In addition, those methods which promised to somehow tame the variety and unpredictability have failed to say anything "comprehensively to this civilization." Science is none too well integrated within itself. One thinks not merely of the thirty to forty particles that have been found 'basic' to matter-energy (not a simple plan, surely); one thinks also of the proliferating specialties, each with its private language and its stream of discoveries that do not somehow cohere and settle any large subjects. It has become a matter of pride that science is never done: her name is Penelope. But if that is so, then science is not what its founders expected, a source of knowledge; rather it is an absorbing activity, whose results can never give its patron civilization any conception of the world, much less of that other fugitive, man.

The 'fugitive, man' can only be captured, his problems confronted only by the method of intelligence that has been made efficient by the trained intellect. This means that what is demanded of teaching in a democracy is the following: teaching directed toward what is finally the most practical end, the training of men of ideas who have a body of factual knowledge "held in solution" and who have the habit and ability to stir this solution around to find different combinations of the facts that can be used. The
practical way of doing this seems to come out of careful instruction in the basic subjects of reading, writing, and counting -- which are not simply skills but the fundamental discoveries of the human intellect -- and then by developing the sense of the 'moral obligation to be intelligent,' to borrow one of John Erskine's essay titles. This sense of the moral obligation to be intelligent develops out of a broadened understanding of what human beings are. Barzun is not demanding a particular definition of man -- Marxian, Freudian, Jungian, or other -- the particular definition is finally the responsibility of each person. Rather, he suggests that such definition ought to begin with knowledge of an "intelligible account of our past as thinking beings."

Hence the importance of history in Barzun's own life. But if one begins by looking at the world itself, the broad divisions of thought and action in that world . . . are three and only three: we live in a world saturated with science, in a world beset by political and economic problems, in a world that mirrors its life in literature, philosophy, religion, and the fine arts.

and so these three become the basis for the curriculum and the instruction of men of ideas. Not all those who are instructed in such a plan will become 'educated,' nor will they become intellectuals. They may be merely intellectualized. But with such an effort the teacher's task ends.
The question, however, is then asked, what is done to make certain that such a man of ideas will not have the "wrong ideas"? Clearly, by denying the possibility or desirability of certainty in humanistic knowledge, Barzun opens up the possibility of error --

in the object and in the beholder; and what is more, of unprovable error ... For if error in the humanities is unavoidably part of the game, then what the humanities involve is not a game; we the beholders are not players within a system of rules; we stand beyond mere deduction from the previously known. In short, error opens the door to real novelty; it is by being possibly wrong and possibly a new creation that the historical resembles (and may thus disclose) life itself. 

In such a view of teaching and education, some issues change their shape or emphasis. Clearly, for example, Barzun is an elitist in the sense that some will be better fitted to work with ideas than others. But it is also clear that he is a democratic elitist, who first recognizes that because men are incommensurable, the sensible thing to do is to recognize political equality and then to work to avoid wasting the talents of anyone. He places much emphasis on the training of the intellect, not because he wants to create a mandarin class, but because some men have that potential, just as some have the potential to play football or baseball or to play musical instruments. To allow a man with intellectual talents the opportunity to develop them to the greatest degree is no more undemocratic than permitting
an athlete the opportunity to develop his or her talents to their greatest degree.71

As for the obvious problems of education in a democratic society -- discrimination that stunts potential among the disadvantaged, the problems of making opportunity equal -- those problems will not be solved by a formula or a method. They will be met by the practical man or woman of ideas. And the aim of teaching is to find and nurture as many of those as possible.
CHAPTER FOUR

Footnotes


3 Barzun, Teacher, p. 19.

4 Barzun, Teacher, p. 19.

5 Barzun, Teacher, pp. 19-20.


7 Barzun, Teacher, p. 19.


11 Barzun, Teacher, p. 20.

12 Henry F. Graff, "Presidents as Penmen," in Parnassus, p. 3.


27 Barzun, *Teacher*, p. 17.


32 Barzun, *Teacher*, pp. 150-151.

33 Barzun, *Teacher*, p. 33.

34 Barzun, *Teacher*, p. 32.

35 Barzun, *Teacher*, p. 33.

36 Barzun, *Teacher*, p. 22.

37 Barzun, *Teacher*, pp. 22-23.

38 Barzun, *Teacher*, p. 23.


40 Barzun, *Teacher*, p. 25.


Barzun, "Humanities," p. 646.


64 Barzun, *Teacher*, pp. 235-236.

65 Ralph Waldo Emerson, in "The American Scholar," the Phi Beta Kappa Address at Harvard College on August 31, 1837, said, "In this distribution of functions, the scholar is in the degenerate state, when, the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or, still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking."


69 Barzun, *Teacher*, p. 150.


71 Barzun, *Intellect*, pp. 94-95.
For Barzun, history and the humanistic disciplines are at the very heart of an education appropriate to life in a democracy. Barzun of course does not limit education to these traditional subjects, but it is clear that in his judgment the sciences, natural and social, are best learned and taught from the historical-humanistic point of view. The citizen needs a fair picture of the world -- one that provides a history of man as an intelligent creature, and so helping him to answer the question, "Who are we in the stream of history?" as well as laying the foundation for further education. Thus the sciences are to be studied as evidence of the workings of the human mind and not simply as instruments of power. The humanistic-historic disciplines and the subject matter of the sciences taught historically are formative, subjects of knowledge the study of which changes the pupil because the study demands a mental commitment beyond simple storing of facts.

The import of history and the humanistic disciplines for general education is therefore clear. But the question
remains of the value of such studies to a professional education, and the next task, the task of this chapter is to examine the question as it touches the education of teachers. This chapter will begin with teacher education as it is presently conceived by leaders in the field, and will proceed from this to show the possible contribution of Barzun's historic-humanistic work to these ideas. If teacher education is thought of as a complex structure, in which a process takes place that is governed by various agents in the community, then our attention is directed only at the process -- the curriculum and instruction of teacher education, because it is with such matters that Barzun has concerned himself, as a teacher and as a critic of teaching practice.

Barzun's own method suggests that the starting place for looking at teacher education is with the discovery of "what's out there" in the real world of teacher education programs. The desire to know 'what is out there' has had a long history, as evidenced by at least three major attempts in this century at answering the question. In 1914, the Carnegie Foundation was enlisted to support an examination of teacher education in Missouri. Nearly two decades later, the United States Office of Education spent six years gathering facts about teacher education throughout the nation. The massive report is concluded with a "Summary and Interpretation." In 1946, still a third study was published
under the auspices of the Commission on Teacher Education of the American Council on Education.\(^1\)

Unfortunately, these reports seem to have been largely forgotten. While there is much literature on the history of education, there is relatively little on teacher education as it has been in America. So, while material is available, there has been, in the thirty years since the A. C. E. study, no comprehensive survey of the state of teacher education. It is possible, however, to find a starting point for a discussion of the field, at least as to its assumptions, in *Educating a Profession*, the report produced for the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education in connection with that organization's Bicentennial Commission on Education.\(^2\) The Commission was appointed to "study and develop a report that would reveal the present structure, process, and governance of teacher education and chart a course for the future."\(^3\) Thus the report reflects both the "is" and the "ought" of the profession as seen by the Commission, and serves to document the principal issues and assumptions about teacher education held by a group of distinguished teacher educators speaking for the national organization of their institutions.

The report speaks of "the process," -- that is, what is to be taught and how it is to be taught in teacher education. While 'process' may or may not be an accurate word to
describe what happens in teacher education, the issue which it connotes is an important and long-debated one. The title of the Commission Report indicates the issue: Educating a Profession, that is, what distinguishes the education of teachers from that of ordinary well-educated men and women? The issue has always posed a difficult question for teacher educators. It may be stated in its traditional form as "What knowledge is of most worth to the prospective teachers and how can they best learn it?" Because teachers practice their art or science in "the real world," the question is clearly more than perfunctory; it is a professional question, because the answers given are likely to have professional consequences. It is in the respective answers to the question of what knowledge is of most worth to teachers that the contrast between Barzun and teacher educators, as represented by the Commission Report, is most pronounced.

The Commission's Answer

At the heart of the Report is the attempt to describe the nature of the instruction given in colleges and universities, both in departments of education and in other departments, that will prepare the teacher in a truly professional manner. The Report attempts to include both what is and what should be the nature of teacher education.

To the Commission, the year 1975 marks the end of an era for teaching which has been characterized by low status and
"absence of a professional culture." These two characteristics are interrelated because the absence of a professional culture -- the special knowledge, behaviors, and skills which serve to set the professionals apart from the laity -- means that teachers are doomed to low status. The expectation of low status by practicing teachers, asserts the Commission, makes possible two self-fulfilling prophecies.

First, teachers will internalize a low opinion of their work; and, second, students who share the negative views of teachers expressed by their parents will learn less effectively than if their education had been conducted in an atmosphere of high esteem for teachers and schools.\(^5\)

The low status also means that good candidates are not going to be attracted to teaching, morale among in-service teachers will be low, and citizens are not going to pay the price needed to pay for education.\(^6\)

The low status of teachers is only one of the difficulties faced by teacher educators. Unlike doctors, who are only seen sometimes by their patients, teachers are in contact with their students for some 15,000 hours over the twelve years of schooling. This means that future teachers have come to see teaching with more familiarity -- and perhaps contempt -- than do future doctors coming to medical school. The "views of schools and teachers" of pre-service teachers have been shaped, often in unfortunate ways, when
teacher educators meet them.

Thus, the task of the teacher educator becomes very complex because it entails not only teaching a technical range of knowledge, behaviors, and skills, but also altering earlier, negative perceptions. To fail is to perpetuate images of teachers grossly incompatible with the professional demands that teachers face.

A major difficulty of those who would "educate a profession" is thus, therefore, one of public relations. The aim is to convince the "client group" that teaching does not deserve its low status. Making a convincing case in favor of teaching would bring better, stronger candidates to the field and would obviate the necessity for teacher educators to wean future teachers away from their negative attitudes.

A second difficulty is to prepare the student for "the professional demands that teachers face." If the Report is not quite clear as to what these are, it is emphatic about their general nature. The teacher's relationship with society, the Commission asserts, has undergone a change, because "society now demands a new breed of teacher . . ." Teaching has been seen as a job that is artistic and idiosyncratic in its nature, whose demands may be met by the common sense and subject matter knowledge of the teacher. The "new breed" of teacher will be able to meet the demands of society, because he will be

highly motivated . . . \(\cap\) and \(\cap\) capable of understanding a broad range of learning .
problems and of designing and implementing curricular and instructional strategies to solve them.

The essential quality of the new profession is, in the eyes of the Commission, capability. The teacher will have the capability to act professionally, because he will possess a "systematic and scientific knowledge base for pedagogical decisions . . .".

The foundation for such capable practice is to be laid down by the nature of the curriculum and instruction of the pre-service teacher's program. The "major components" of this program are predicated on the general assumption that they should contribute to capable practice, and so there is a very strong dose of the "practical" in each. It is convenient to divide these components into three general groups: 1) general or liberal studies, 2) professional foundations and teaching specialty, and 3) clinical-laboratory experiences and the practicum.

1) General or Liberal Studies: The Commission recognizes the common element of college education of all students as the general or liberal studies, but notes that these studies are of special significance for teachers because of the teacher's role. To begin, the elementary and secondary teachers need to be generally educated because they are "teachers of general education." The specific subject matter included in this general education is not explained, but
some sense of what the Commission desires can be gleaned
deom its discussion of how the general or liberal studies
will meet the teacher's professional needs. The profession-
al teacher needs general subject matter "to clarify modes
and areas of choice for students who will soon be citizens,
parents, and adult consumers." 11 Thus the general or liber-
al studies should not be, as they have often been tradition-
ally taught, separated from "real world problems and is-
sues." Properly taught, as by an "interdisciplinary team,"
the general studies will address these aspects of the real
world by providing pre-service teachers with

extended opportunity to explore the inter-
relationships of knowledge and their im-
plications for teaching and learning . . .
In addition to these explorations the stu-
dent will be helped in experiencing deci-
sion-making and choice, the creation of
personal meaning, and the use of evidence
and logic.12

An even more important part of the general education of
the teacher-to-be -- at least as judged by the space given
to it by the Report -- is the "preeducation in the under-
girding disciplines." These disciplines provide, the Com-
mission asserts, an "adequate theoretical base" for the
complex nature of teaching. Among these disciplines are psy-
chology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. The pre-
education in these disciplines is important because the pro-
fessional education component is too full to take responsi-
bility for teaching them while at the same time, true
professional education demands, and indeed could not function without it, such undergirding. Like the general and liberal studies, the undergirding disciplines are to be laced with a strong tincture of utility in the way they are to be taught. It is again asserted that the undergirding disciplines have failed to be relevant to the professional needs of teachers. The Commission gives four principal reasons for this failure.

First, the disciplines have been taught "as separate and rigorous bodies of knowledge" by "disciplinarians" who fail to show how experimental psychology is related to, say, sociology. The integration of all knowledge will aid the professional educator who is called upon to "marshall data, principles, and procedures from all knowledge areas to help people with a variety of problems . . ."¹³

Second, the students are disgruntled because they find that the undergirding disciplines are divorced from practice since the disciplinarians too often espouse elaborate theories that are not congruent with their "theories in use." The student and the Commission demand that disciplinarians work harder to demonstrate how espoused theories may become part of professional practice. For example, if a professor espouses a theory that each learner is unique, he is responsible for showing how the theory can be put in practice.
Third, the Commission finds that traditional disciplinary study is too intellectual and denies the "personal meaning (emotional, intuitive, normative)" for the teacher. The disciplines like physics and history fail to show how their knowledge can contribute to clarifying or justifying the private beliefs of the teacher. The imperative is not limited to teachers themselves, but also to their students. The effective educators must help their students to discover the personal meaning of ideas and subject matter, encouraging them to translate these personal insights into significant public action.

Therefore, the disciplinarian will have to abandon his exclusive interest in his specialized body of facts and help his students "engage in 'personal belief and value clarification . . .' " 14

Finally, and this is a corollary of the third criticism, the disciplines have avoided their obligation to speak out on questions of

social purposes, ultimate values, morality and the meaning of human existence . . . Just as they have eschewed the search for personal meaning, the disciplines have limited their attention in public matters to refining of 'methods, vocabulary, concepts, style, and strategies of presentation'15 of the disciplines.

2) Professional Studies Component and Academic Specialty:

Noting that the academic specialty is studied outside of the department of education, the Commission asserts that
it is often taught in the same disadvantageous way as the disciplines. While denying the need for a professional level of preparation in an academic specialty, the Commission demands a professional level of preparation for teaching the special subject. This means that a simple knowledge of the subject is not enough.

Not only do teachers need to know the technical language and the concepts of their disciplines, they require an 'in breadth' understanding of how a subject matter can be useful to students in discovering personal levels of meaning, and how students can translate this meaning into human daily action.16

Likewise, the foundations of education, history, philosophy, and psychology of education are not to be disciplines but, rather, integrative subjects which

... provide interdisciplinary and conceptual illumination of the issues, problems, and procedures confronting contemporary educators everywhere so that more professional and humane public action might ensue. 17

The foundations of education are thus judged, not as they provide foundational knowledge, but as they are instrumental in bringing about professional and "humane public action." This demand for usefulness is the theme running through the Commission's desideratum for the professional component of teacher education.

3) Laboratory-Clinical Experiences and Practicum:

The Commission acknowledges both the criticism of the overly theoretical nature of teacher education and its
disagreement with such criticism. Instead, the Commission suggests, theory and practice are not linked closely enough. A way to bring about such a linkage is by means of "Field experiences which illuminate educational theory and course work, and extend practice."\(^{18}\) Theory is important because of its power to illuminate practice.

While the specific details of the fieldwork, clinical-laboratory experience component is not clear in the Report, it is certain that the intent is to give pre-service teachers an opportunity "to understand and appreciate" theoretical concepts by giving them the opportunity to study "actual behavioral situations."\(^{19}\) In addition, the Commission demands "a continuum of field experiences" that lead from theory of professional knowledge and skills to appropriate professional practice.\(^{20}\) Again, the Report does not make a clear statement about this continuum; it does not define its endpoints and the arbitrary intervals along it. What is in the Report is a sense of the importance of laboratory and clinical experiences in making a contribution to teachers beginning their careers with a "repertoire of teaching behaviors and skills" developed out of the "professional and academic part of their education. It is also clear that this repertoire is the result of practice in "a controlled training environment."\(^{21}\)
Unfortunately, the description of the repertoire of skills is not only brief but very general:

They know how to conduct needs assessments. They know the objective of democracy and its strategies. They know about present and future. They know how to utilize effectively people, time, space, equipment, and materials for instructional purposes. They know how to assess teaching and learning. They lead, and they follow. They function in places like schools; they function equally well as educators in other settings. They can design learning activities with rather high probabilities for attaining publicly announced learning objectives. They are competent. They are accountable. 22

The purpose of this description of the Bicentennial Commission Report's discussion of the components of preservice teacher education has been to provide a starting place for answering the question of this chapter: "What practical difference might it make to thought about teacher education if the educational thought of Jacques Barzun and its historical base were taken into account?" Teacher education as a field of endeavor tends to be amorphous, but the Bicentennial Commission represents an association of colleges for Teacher Education, speaks through a number of important people in teacher education and thus may be taken as representative, if not of practice, then of the "best" thinking in the field. It is thus a suitable starting place. The section of the Report on the "process" of preparing teachers has been selected because, in sum, it is most
clearly parallel to Barzun's educational thought.

The Role of the Teacher: Barzun's View

The approach of the Commission to the question of the role of the teacher contrasts sharply with Barzun's. The Commission is in what might be termed the "missionary" tradition, which conceives the teacher as a kind of holy man, a guru sent to bring certain blessings to the troubled. An early representative of the tradition is Horace Mann, whose dedication address for the new Normal School at Bridgewater, Massachusetts, in 1846, also commemorated a new era. For Mann, the new normal school, of which Bridgewater was the word made flesh, was to prepare the 'new' teacher and thus was "a new instrumentality in the advancement of the race." "Coiled up in the institution as in a spring, there is a vigor whose uncoiling may wheel the spheres."²³

In 1846, the dominant metaphor was religious; in 1976, the metaphors are those of science. As Whitehead pointed out,

> each age has its dominant preoccupation; and, during . . . three centuries . . . the cosmology derived from science has been asserting itself at the expense of older points of view with their origins elsewhere.²⁴

Thus, the Commission marks 1975 as the divide between two eras. On one side of the divide, the teacher is viewed as a modestly skilled artist whose only resources, aside from his
own native talents, are common sense and some knowledge of the subject matter to be taught. On the Commission's side of the divide, the teacher has become

a highly diversified professional who, because of appropriate pedagogical knowledge, values, and skills, will be able to help others reach their best human, professional, and societal potentials. . . ."

The teacher is still an "instrumentality for the improvement of the race" although now his role is that of a "human service educator."25 Thus where Mann's teacher, properly prepared, would bring about the "... diffusion and ultimate triumph of all Glorious Christianity,"26 the Commission's human service educator will "help" people in the community with their problems by "marshalling data, principles, and procedures from all knowledge areas."

For Barzun, the tradition of teaching is that which professes to draw the data for its conclusions from a reflective view of the past. For Barzun himself, this means that talk about teaching needs to account for both the "known limits of schooling,"27 and the humanist's view of human life. It would be too easy to describe Barzun as a conservative whose view of teaching is shaped by recognition of the idea that what men have done limits what might be done in the future.

In part, this is a fair view of Barzun's position. But he is also a humanist in the older sense of the word. The humanist Barzun is interested in both what has happened as
as revealed in the heightened images of reality to be found in art and literature. This means, for Barzun, that history and the historical arts give knowledge of persons rather than of categories. They emphasize the unique rather than the interchangeable. If each birth thus brings a new and unique being into the world, then history and the arts are conservative, because in them are preserved the acts and deeds of the past. But in them also is found the constant possibility of the unexpected. Prince Hal can not be predicted by examining the life of Henry Bolingbroke, his father; King Henry V is not forecast by the events in the life of Prince Hal, although each is the same man at different times of his life. History thus implies the future as constantly new beginnings, although it cannot forecast their nature; at best, its forecasts are gnomic, as were the utterances at Delphi. Such a view must be accounted for in a conception of what a teacher is. In the view expressed by the Commission, ends are in sight. The teacher who will have the knowledge, values, and skills will be able to help members of a client group find their "societal potential." In Barzun's humanistic-historically informed view, the ends are not in sight. The future is the unexpected, forecast by the past. A teacher who would "help" must recognize the point at which helping becomes inhibiting. A teacher who would help a student reach a particular end is perhaps denying the possibilities that he might have found on his own.
The contrast between the two positions may be expressed as a paradox. By prescribing for the future, the Commission is really looking backwards, since all we can know of the future is based on our knowledge of the present and the past. Barzun's attention on the past as it shades into the present permits him to be a kind of futurist.

To develop the paradox, we may look at how each prepares students for the future. The Commission gives a large role to what is called "values clarification" in the preparation of teachers. Values Clarification is a diffuse movement which postulates certain techniques for helping students "get clear about their values." Its prescription for a program of teacher preparation is a kind of Formalism. Teachers are to be "provided" with a philosophy of education that will enable them "to induce operational values from real school situations, and to test the consequences of assumed values." The Formalist nature of this provision lies in the particularization of the "operational values" which are prescribed by the philosophy with which they are provided. The properly armed teachers "are to be creative, democratic, integrative, learner-centered and the like..."

While the Commission is aware of the difficulty of obtaining reliable evidence on values, it is clear that its point of view holds this to be a technical problem and not one of substance. The Commission, for instance, reproduces
approvingly a recent work on "Process Skills as Goals for the Helping Professions." An appropriate "skill" is "showing and maintaining respect and regard toward others, especially one's clients," and the rationale for its inclusion is that it is

essential to establishing a supportive environment where the helpee can profit from the nurturance and direction of the helper and will implement the action prescribed by the helper.

While the Commission does not set forth a series of specific predictions, the kind of world in which a human service educator can function as described in the work is one in which the future actions and present realities are linked by the "prescriptions" of a knowledgeable professional, working like a doctor, who knows what consequences are likely to result from which actions.

Theoretical and empirical knowledge become central to a teacher preparation program operating with such assumptions, because it gives teachers the tools for the understanding and control of classroom events. The heavy emphasis on "useful" knowledge in the curriculum of the teacher education program means that the rationale for making choices of curriculum is that the choice can be linked to some aspect of the future - - some desirable outcome. Thus values clarification technique is included because teachers should be able to clarify their own values and those of their "helpees"- -
students. The demand for useful knowledge has the additional effect of reducing knowledge to techniques. Foundations of Education are valuable insofar as they are techniques for bringing about certain ends: exploring the "hidden value dimensions of education practices and policies," developing a sense of social purpose, and an "activist" concern for socio-political ends of education.  

Barzun's view, drawing on history and the historical arts, is different in practical ways from that of the Commission. History describes what has happened, but not what is to come -- only that there is a future that will in some now-undefined respects resemble the past. The historical arts describe the uniqueness of persons of whom the only expectation is the unexpected. The question of education then becomes "What is the best way to prepare persons for a future whose nature is at once prosaic and fantastic, and unknown?" The answer to this question as it may be applied to teachers is best achieved by first answering it more generally -- as it touches the education of citizens.  

The aim of education is to make "each pupil a self-propelling individual who not only has learned but can continue to learn. This aim, that of every thinker from Plato on down," is possible not because persons need to be taught to be self-propelled. Men and women, for example, do not need to be taught to think for themselves, they do think,
and such thinking is what one does by him or herself. 38

There is no other way to think. The quality and nature of
of the thought, however, varies from person to person, as it
must if persons are unique. Thus Barzun distinguishes edu-
cation from instruction. Education suggests "the diversity
of men's minds and talents, which seek different ends" 39
and is thus something broader than instruction, which is
simply the attempt to abolish the student's ignorance about
subject matter. Instruction is not addressed to making a
person a thinker, but to affecting the quality and efficien-
cy of his thought. The aim of fitting one for life in a
democracy is best accomplished by acknowledging the power to
think, the freedom that is innate to the mind. The mind
works best, asserts Barzun, not by learning a series of
techniques for dealing with the possible contingencies of
the future, but

in precisely the opposite way; in art,
science, in a truly progressive education
or democratic society, it seeks to dis-
tinguish differences and to deal with
each appropriately. Freedom is in this
sense native to the human mind, but being
difficult to establish in an alien world
full of conflicting minds, it generates
the institutions of political democracy.
Democracy is thus the result and not the
cause of our deep-seated desire for di-
versity, freedom, and tolerance. 40

The aim of education is to make more efficient the na-
tive powers of the mind to distinguish differences and there-
by make more open to intelligent action the task of dealing
with each appropriately. The nature or kind of action is not prescribable beforehand, because it depends upon ends and means available in a particular situation. The province of the schoolmaster must and should be limited to the present and to the child as he is. The province must be so limited, because the schoolmaster does not have knowledge beyond that central reality, and it should be thus limited because the schoolmaster who tries to go beyond the boundaries is in danger of becoming what Shaw called "an abortionist" - - one who would make a man when such a task is clearly beyond his powers.

By narrowing the attention of the schoolmaster to the immediate reality of the child - - or, the student being prepared to teach - - two benefits accrue. First, by ignoring the possible future results of education - - such as a philosophy of life, or "an activist concern for socio-political ends of education" - - the schoolmaster can attend to teaching what can be taught. It becomes clear that "activism" is not taught to the student, although the student can perhaps be indoctrinated, as Barzun would point out. The things that can be taught are those subjects capable of being made into objects - - either literally or symbolically - - and thus of being shared by the minds of teacher and taught. Whether this should be Latin or electrical wiring is a matter of choice.
Second, the future outcomes of the education would have been addressed in the proper order. To Barzun, it is an unfortunate and common error to confuse the possible results of instruction with instruction itself. A pupil may see a new relationship among the facts which he is studying. The new insight is an outcome, and is therefore not the principal focus of the instruction in the subject. Preposterism, the putting of what is pre- in the post position, is Barzun's word for this error. It is preposterous to teach for excellence. Excellence may result from hard work and attentiveness; it is these latter things which the teacher can in fact teach. The as-yet unborn, though immanent, century and the present day which "defies description" can not be prepared for. Instead, persons are prepared who will live in that coming century and who will make essays at defining the present day. They are taught how to read, write, and count. They learn something of the history of man as a thinking being, and of the adventures of man's thought in science, social sciences, literature and art. The ideal outcome is something like what Augustine attributed to his own education: he could read whatever had been written, understand what he read, and express whatever he thought so that others could understand him. Now, it may be that a person so instructed will take an activist interest in the socio-political ends of education, but it is not a guaranteed outcome. Of course, neither is it a guaranteed outcome when
that is the principal object of education. On the other hand, the more prescriptive education for the future becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: students so instructed will have an activist concern, but the concern will be only that which is defined by the preparation.

Barzun's way, that of attending to the person, may find students erring, being wrong-headed, or even apathetic. But it also may result in a genuine novelty. What is wanted is not the man who is loaded down with the theoretical and empirical knowledge of the day -- a good portion of which is wrong -- but the man who possesses both a fund of such knowledge and the habit of viewing and using it critically. The implication for this in the preparation of teachers is for a solid general education rather than the narrow professional kind advocated by the Commission. The Commission's program is of necessity narrow, because it demands usefulness or relevance of all studies. As Whitehead asserts, the danger of a narrow professionalism is that

it produces minds in a groove. Each profession makes progress, but it is progress in a groove. Now to be mentallin a groove is to live contemplating a given set of abstractions. The groove prevents straying across country, and the abstraction abstracts from something to which no further attention is paid. But there is no groove of abstractions which is adequate for the comprehension of human life. 42

Barzun's career has been an exemplar of the attempt to escape an education which sets the mind merely to
contemplation of abstractions. The chief value of a general education -- and that, for Barzun, is a program in which the subjects being studied are approached historically -- is that it sets one to what Whitehead described as the "concrete appreciation of the individual facts in their full interplay of emergent values." 43

For Barzun, as have been shown, history and the historical arts give knowledge of persons first. Hence his approving citation of James's admonition:

You can give humanistic value to almost anything by teaching it historically. Geology, economics, mechanics are humanities when taught with reference to the successive achievements of the genuses to which these sciences owe their being. Not taught thus, literature remains grammar, art a catalogue, history a list of dates, and natural sciences a sheet of formulas and weights and measures. 44

There is, of course, no implied choice between facts and principles in each study. One must be led from knowledge of facts with discipline through principles. 45 For this reason, Barzun does not favor restructuring of subjects into newer and "more relevant" modes of inquiry. It makes sense to study French history and culture when learning the French language, 46 but it makes less sense to try to integrate history and psychology and psychiatry, because the new subject vitiates the power of each discipline when learned by itself. 47 In brief, one is creating new abstractions which ignore the particular facts and their relations. The
breadth that is gained by permitting the study of the various disciplines means that particular facts are viewed from a variety of perspectives. The integration of these views is left to the student and occurs in his own mind, and comes during and after study, rather than before.

The conception of general education advocated by Barzun is thus simpler and more powerful than that of the Commission. Where the Commission calls for integrative subjects, inter-disciplinary teams, values clarification, decision-making, Barzun advocates teaching subjects (taught by inter-disciplinary teams whenever appropriate), which prepare the individual in reading and writing, and in acquainting him with the history of man as an intelligent being. Integration and the uses of knowledge are left, as they must be, to the individual.

This contrast with the Commission shows Barzun's work implying a different view of the general or liberal studies and the undergirding disciplines in the teacher's preparation. The contrast, of course, is that "useful" or relevant knowledge is more likely to be found in knowledge for its own sake, rather than in knowledge which has apparent direct connections with this or that professional function. The emphasis in the one is on use for the profession, while in the other, the use is for the person who may become a professional.
The next question has to do with the teacher's practice, with teaching. On this question, it is clear that Barzun's criticism of the Report would be that by preposterizing the teacher's job, it befogs and complicates the nature of teaching. The Report claims the teacher to be an educator who has the knowledge to "solve" problems for a variety of society's ills. Given the setting of teacher preparation -- twenty-five or thirty credit hours of "professional courses," almost no clinical experience save a largely unsupervised practicum, and the demand for an academic specialty, it hardly seems likely that the Report is talking about any sort of real world. Next, the Report demands that the teacher "help" others reach their "greatest societal potential." Such a demand asks for all sorts of very difficult questions to be answered -- questions that have not been answered by anyone -- professional or not, much less by teachers. In brief, as the cliché has it, the Report raises many more questions and difficulties than it solves. For example, are all of the situations faced by teachers problems that can be solved? Johnny, with his apparent lack of ability to do arithmetic, is not a problem, but rather a dynamic fact, not to be solved, but to be met on some sensible terms and then taught.

Barzun sees instead of the "sulphur-and-brimstone nebulal of Education" three fundamental questions that follow
from the realization that teaching is something different from education: "How is it to be done? What should we teach? and To whom?" 48

What do these three questions imply for the education or preparation of teachers?

How is teaching to be done? The error to be avoided, of course, is the reduction of this question to one of method. Method must be present, but method is a metaphor for the fact that the teacher's principal "tool" (again metaphorical usage) is mind trained to observe some general principles. The teacher is working to teach something - subject matter. Thus the teacher's own education must be carefully attended to. He needs to know whatever it is he is going to teach, both as a subject and as an object. As a subject, it is known subjectively: he or she knows how the pressure on a column of mercury feels, or can imagine how Tintern Abbey and the Wye appeared to Wordsworth. But he also knows it as an object of study, its vocabulary, its method of inquiry, and its principles, so that it can be held and examined in a classroom. That said, Barzun is careful to make clear that the teacher is indeed a pedagogue, and that the possession of organized subject matter is not enough. It is a "mischievous lie" 49 that anybody can manage to teach who has mastered the subject and who sets his mind to it. This truth does not, in Barzun's view, make
legitimate the "methods" that are taught in education departments. No method fits the dynamic fact of pupil and teacher. The teacher's first task is, therefore, no more than to discover what the student knows and what his capacity is for learning more. This is a difficult task if the teacher wants to know about the student as a psychiatrist would know him, but it is less taxing when considering his knowledge of the multiplication tables. Thus the teacher needs not a method but "advice, self-criticism and guided practice." The advice and guided practice lead him back and forth from the classroom and the children in front of him to what he knows generally about persons -- from whatever sources. He might have supposed that "whatever is shown will be seen, ignoring the minds to be prepared for seeing." The novice must learn to sense what it is that his student is now having difficulty with, how the subject matter, organized and in mind as he has learned it, must be rearranged so as to be taught -- to connect "the ideal form of the subject with the actual capacity of the learner." In brief, Barzun's sense of pedagogy is that it is of supreme importance, but no prescriptions can be made that are too precise. Rather, it must be described in the way that the United States Constitution describes how the Federal government is to be structured and operated. There are too many unknown cases that are likely to arise. Thus, while pictures and films can be used to advantage, Barzun notes that
One scientist at least, Professor Robert Heizer, has been heard to declare that 'one idea is worth a thousand pictures,' and he accordingly prefers to teach by lecturing rather than by showing slides and films.54

That there will be fumbling by the teacher along the way is to be expected -- it is worth the while for students to have a teacher who fumbles on occasion, and thinks all the time he is in class. One learns not by a photographic copying of things shown but by an internal drama imitative of the action witnessed. When the instructor gropes for a word, corrects himself, interjects a comment or an analogy not directly called for, he gives a spectacle of man thinking which no slick film or televised show will provide.55

The only rule is, then, perhaps, "think about it." Although the rule sounds overly demanding compared with the confident tone struck by the Commission which says that, with the proper preparation in theoretical and empirical knowledge, the single demand on the teacher will be the marshalling of that knowledge to such and such a problem, Barzun's position is much closer to the generally accepted understanding of the relation between knowledge and action.

For example, in an earlier AACTE publication, Teachers for the Real World, in addressing the relation of theoretical knowledge to practice, it is noted that it is important to recognize that the relation of theoretical knowledge to an occupation is typically indirect...[it] must be adapted to suit the particular reality that it meets. It is seldom possible, for example, to apply a proposition
Earlier, Abraham Kaplan contrasts a "realist" and an "instrumentalist" view of theoretical knowledge. The realists see theory as a kind of map of the real world. Once the map is made of the new territory, it is forever ours. Kaplan contrasts his own instrumentalist view with this more static view of theoretical knowledge. He continues the map analogy.

In order to make the territory truly ours, we must live on it, colonize it and develop it . . . This is the instrumentalist view . . . We do something with them. They are tools of inquiry, and of reflective choice in problematic situations. In the pointed phrase of J. J. Thompson, a theory is 'a policy rather than a creed.' 57

Dewey, in his 1904 essay on the "Relation of Theory to Practice," contrasts the apprenticeship with the professional notion of preparation. While the apprenticeship gives immediate proficiency in some skill, the goal of professional preparation of teachers grounded firmly in theoretical knowledge is growth which can come not from mere application of "useful knowledge" but from the inspiration and constant criticism of intelligence applying the best that is available. This is possible only where the would-be teacher has become fairly saturated with his subject matter, and with his psychological and ethical philosophy of education. Only when such things have become incorporated in mental habit, have become part of the working tendencies of
observation, insight, and reflection, will
the principles work automatically, uncon-
sciously, and hence promptly and effec-
tively.

Finally, the clearest statement of this position is in
William James's first lecture in the series of *Talks to
Teachers* on 'The New Psychology.' There he asserts that it
is a great error to think that psychological knowledge will
provide the source for definite programs, schemes, and meth-
ods of instruction.

> Psychology is a science, and teaching is
an art; and sciences never generate arts
directly out of themselves. An interme-
diary inventive mind must make the ap-
lication, by using its originality.

What all of these statements have in common with
Barzun's position is their affirmation of intelligence. In
a culture whose prevailing form of thought is dominated by
"scientism and machinery,", Barzun affirms the final im-
portance of intelligence, of mind, and hence of freedom.
It is a pluralistic universe in which we live, and our
knowledge about it is always partial and temporary, because
of the dynamic nature of human beings. The task is not to
make a map of "what is out there" and then to live in that
territory and abide by the rules discovered in the mapping,
but to map what is mappable and to distinguish it from what
is dynamic, making the dynamic ours by thought as it appears
unexpectedly when we crest the hill.
Barzun's complaint about education as it is, is that it has subscribed to the position of scientism and machinery, and has abandoned intellect and thereby mind and intelligence. What implications for teacher preparation are there in Barzun's re-affirmation of freedom and intellect?

To begin, Barzun's view suggests a simplification of the conception of teaching. Teaching is indeed difficult and demands thought, commitment, energy, and effort, but it is less demanding than teacher educators, as represented in the AACTE Commission Report aver. Rather than "human service educators," the need is for teachers who can, not "service" humans, but teach automobile servicing, or writing! Thus simplifying the concept of what teachers do would have benefits for teachers in classrooms and for students preparing to teach. For classroom teachers, there would be lessening of the discrepancy between what they find in the world of reality and the heady "word-alcohol" of such documents as the Report have led them to believe was their role. Thus, instead of solving community problems, they could devote their energy, intelligence, and skill to teaching what they can. Such simplification might have the additional benefit of making the public less likely to dump social ills on the school and then turn cynical when the school fails to "deal with" drugs and integration. A teacher and a school could bear the burden of being
"accountable" in such circumstances.

The demand for simplification might be described as a "back to basics" approach, although it is less that than it is a return to teaching and instruction and a turn away from education as "human engineering." The shibboleth "back to basics" has an air of parsimony about it that schools would only offer the three R's and no frills. Simplification means only a kind of sobriety about schools and schooling. The arts are basic to a general education, as are the sciences. If the students in the school are sexually active, sobriety perhaps demands that some appropriate instruction is also basic. At the same time, the movement called "Moral Education" which might be called upon to supplement the instruction in sex should be denied the status of being basic unless the proponents can answer the questions: What is going to be taught? What instruction is going to be given?

The second simplification proceeds from the first. With the role of the teacher made clearer, the role of teacher preparation resolves itself. Perhaps instead of being departments of education, or teacher education, there might grow up departments of "principles and practices," or simply departments of pedagogy. If the teacher is to teach, the centerpiece of instruction in a department of pedagogy would be just that. Thus, instead of composing long lists
of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that teacher education must foster, the pedagogues would have an easier way to make the curriculum. It would be apparent that a professional course would need to be built upon a strong basic, general education at the heart of which would be the 3 R's because they finally are the principal means to self-education. It would also be clear that the undergirding disciplines would need to be taught as disciplines rather than as usable techniques that can be applied to professional problems, for such an attempt complicates and distorts the value of the disciplines and makes them tendentious rather than formative and informative. "Methods," as such, would disappear in favor of guided practice teaching. The subjects that would be the partners to the guided practice teaching would be what is now called the Foundations of Education -- history and philosophy of education, educational psychology taught so as to bring light and shadow to questions of teaching. These will, of course, also have to be taught soberly. Care would thus be given to answering questions truly within the scope of each. In the case of History of Education, it will serve to show where we are in the stream of educational thought. It will not serve to justify present programs or trends; Philosophy of Education would subject educational thought to careful scrutiny: where has it come from, what does it mean, and how does it address the issues of teaching and learning?
Taken as a whole, Jacques Barzun's written work serves as an example of how a brilliant and articulate man takes thought about education from the perspective of the ancient humanist tradition. He refuses to claim that he has a method which he can use to demonstrate the truth of his statements, and so his approach is that of an intelligent man talking to, arguing with, and attempting to persuade others whom he respects. The issues he addresses are those of concern to citizens of this democracy and his aim is not to settle any of them finally, but to demand that the discussion which pervades the democracy be as intelligent as possible. He is thus not arguing for a specific program or course of action, but for a few general assumptions which he believes will preserve the possibility for intelligent discussion of the issues of democratic life.

The first of these assumptions is the pluralistic nature of the human universe. To look at the human adventure historically is to see the many ways there are to be human, the many modes taken by the single human mind. A pluralistic universe does not, for Barzun, finally resolve itself into solipsism — "whatever you think is fine." Rather, it demands that a responsible thinker needs to account for as many forms and kinds of data as possible. Studies based on statistical samples of a large population must be cross-checked with what one knows about particular people, for example. It is also important that no single mode of inquiry
be allowed absolute hegemony, or that other modes are devalued unless they give the same data as the mode currently fashionable.

The next assumption is that the historical arts provide valuable knowledge about people, which, while differing from knowledge yielded by statistical social science, should not be deemed inferior to it. The historical arts address different data from the statistical social sciences, and hence yield different sorts of knowledge. The particular strength of the historical arts lies in their ability to capture the singular case and those aspects of each person that constitute his uniqueness. The historical arts are, therefore, a way to confirm the pluralist nature of the human universe. While such investigation does not enable one to predict or control the human activities thus studied, it does being understanding and is valuable for thinking about that which one does not need to predict and which one does not desire to control.

A plural universe and the diversity of ways to be human -- in short, the constant presence of what is possible -- demand that men suspect all systems, methods, and techniques which claim to show the Way. Without the technique, method, or system, man must not only admit his ultimate uncertainty, but even find in it that margin which permits him to take thought and shape his world as he would, or can.
Because man must finally live by his wits, Barzun asserts the importance of the intellect . . .

intelligence stored up and made into habits of discipline, signs and symbols of meaning, chains of reasoning, and spurs to emotions . . . Intellect is at once a body of common knowledge and the channels through which the right particle of it can be brought to bear quickly, without the effort of redemonstration on the matter at hand. 62

It is with the intellect that Barzun's views of education resolve themselves. He distinguishes between education and instruction because he sees in instruction the efficient way to train the intellect. While intellect is not the only way to live by one's wits, it is the way which can be enhanced by purposeful action of a teacher. The chief fault he finds with American educational practice is the tendency to devalue instruction and to concentrate instead on making school resemble life itself. Since whatever a school can do to turn itself into life-like experience will always fall short of life itself, the school will turn out to be a poor imitation of life. The strength of the school is in its distance from life. The distance allows the school to honor the mind and to permit it free play. The distance makes it possible for students to be disinterested observers and examiners of the human adventure, and so to see its diversity, its complexity, and its possibility.
The aim of teachers, therefore, is simply the abolition of ignorance, giving pupils the opportunity to learn the communal knowledge of the race and thereby become students. The preparation of teachers thus becomes clearer. A teacher-to-be needs a disinterested general education, specific preparation in one or more of the organized bodies of human knowledge, augmented by both that which will enhance his ability to have his pupils share, for a time, the same thought, and supervised practice teaching.

The significance of Barzun's work is in his example of how the intelligent layman can come to culture and work to understand the issues at hand, and, out of understanding, take action.
CHAPTER FIVE

Footnotes


3 Howsam and others, Educating, p. v.


5 Howsam and others, Educating, p. 79.

6 Howsam and others, Educating, p. 79.

7 Howsam and others, Educating, p. 79.

8 Howsam and others, Educating, p. 80.

9 Howsam and others, Educating, p. 81.

10 Howsam and others, Educating, p. 80.
11 Howsam and others, *Educating*, p. 82.

12 Howsam and others, *Educating*, p. 82.


14 Howsam and others, *Educating*, p. 84.

15 Howsam and others, *Educating*, p. 84.


18 Howsam and others, *Educating*, p. 98.


20 Howsam and others, *Educating*, p. 93.


22 Howsam and others, *Educating*, p. 89.


For example, see Sidney Simon, "Values and Teaching," in Religious Education, 68 No. 2 (March/April 1973), pp. 183-194.

Howsam and others, Educating, p. 89.

Howsam and others, Educating, p. 90.

Howsam and others, Educating, p. 90.

Howsam and others, Educating, pp. 164-165.

Howsam and others, Educating, p. 165.

Howsam and others, Educating, p. 88.

Howsam and others, Educating, p. 87.


Barzun, Intellect, p. 93.

Barzun, Freedom, p. 8.


Whitehead, Science, p. 197.


Barzun, Science, p. 159.


Barzun, Teacher, pp. 119-132.


Bibliography


--------- "Art and Educational Inflation." Art Education, 31, No. 6 (October 1978), pp. 4-10.


"Teachers, Parents, and Money." Harper's, February 1956, p. 73.

"Tomorrow's University - - Back to the Middle Ages?", Saturday Review, 52 (15 November 1969), pp. 23-25; 60-61.


"What is a Dictionary?" The American Scholar, 32 No. 2 (Spring 1963), pp. 176-181.


Broudy, Harry S. "Tacit Knowing as a Rationale for Liberal Education." *Teachers College Record*, 80, No. 3 (1979), pp. 446-462.


-------- The Moral Obligation to be Intelligent and Other Essays. New York: Dufﬁeld. 1921.


Hicks, Granville. Rev. of *Teacher in America,* The New Republic, 2 April 1945, p. 453.


James, William. Talks to Teachers on Psychology: And to Students on Some of Life's Ideals. 1899, rpt.; New York: Henry Holt. 1929.


Rolo, Charles. Rev. of The House of Intellect, *Atlantic*, June 1959, p. 82.


